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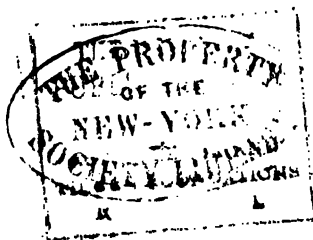
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# THE VEIL WITHDRAWN

A NOVEL

BY

BERTON J. MADDUX

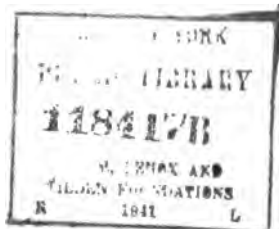


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*The Veil Withdrawn.*

## CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Mr. Worthington's Palatial Residence	7
II. A Stranger Enters . . . . .	16
III. "Eternity!—The Veil Will Be With- drawn—Eternity!" . . . . .	25
IV. Clues . . . . .	34
V. On the Morn . . . . .	44
VI. Dennis the Coachman . . . . .	53
VII. Eva Worthington . . . . .	58
VIII. An Intrusion . . . . .	83
IX. Claude Nicholas . . . . .	88
X. An Admission . . . . .	93
XI. The Unfinished Letter (C) . . . . .	99
XII. Mr. Hinckle at the Telephone . . . . .	113
XIII. Mr. Hammer . . . . .	119
XIV. Dennis on the Stand . . . . .	130
XV. Miss Shaler . . . . .	138
XVI. Eva's Disappearance . . . . .	153
XVII. Sensational Revelings . . . . .	168
XVIII. The Verdict . . . . .	187

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. Bewilderment! Bewilderment! Bewil- derment! . . . . .	192
XX. At Mrs. McClure's Boarding House . . . . .	206
XXI. Mutterings . . . . .	217
XXII. In House No. 22 . . . . .	232
XXIII. The Picture, the Tear, the Voice . . . . .	238
XXIV. Arrested . . . . .	246
XXV. The Innocent—The Guilty . . . . .	252

# THE VEIL WITHDRAWN.

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## CHAPTER. I.

### MR. WORTHINGTON'S PALATIAL RESIDENCE.

I had a dream which was not all a dream.—BYRON.

It was a calm, but sultry afternoon about the middle of August, when Mr. Worthington, the district attorney who had been very busily engaged and mentally taxed upon the prosecution of a suit at law, left his city office and counsel rooms for a cool and quiet retreat,—his country home, situated just two miles east of the incorporated limits of the city of C——, Ohio. It was in this elysium, that he found exquisite pleasure and real enjoyment after a day of restless pleading and heated discussion incident to a real attorney's profession. His residence, situated as it was,

in the very heart of nature's beauties, surrounded by long stretches of forests; cool and shady groves; the din of a winding brooklet faintly visible, but plainly audible, in the distance; lawns of superb grandeur, dotted here and there with beds of flowers, filling the evening air with an extreme richness of sweet fragrance rarely experienced.

These, together with other pleasantries, which time forbids me to mention in the relation of this brief narrative, no doubt induced the eminent attorney to return home half an hour earlier, upon this, the closing day of his week's practice.

His coachman, upon approaching within a short distance of this very elaborately furnished residence, was invariably hailed by the childish prattle of two urchins, Mabel and Howard, children of this great lawyer. After being duly admitted into the carriage, and very tenderly greeted by their esteemed father, upon this particular occasion, they were soon wheeled to the front entrance of this grand old home, where upon alighting, the husband and children were always warmly greeted and welcomed by Mrs. Worthington and her daughter Eva, an estimable young lady whose abilities, accomplishments, and sociability had won her many admirers.



*Mr. Worthington's Palatial Residence.* 9

A few minutes after the attorney had entered this time-honored old home, he stepped into his library, and began writing upon some legal matter, when his wife, Mrs. Worthington, came into the room; as she was usually wont to do, in the evening after Mr. Worthington had returned home, and had occasion to visit his library; though never intruding when a client was present. Mrs. Worthington had in her hand a prominent American magazine, from which she had been reading. She took a seat upon a large lounge, which was stationed on the left of the room upon entering and alongside the wall.

On passing a few courtesies upon entering, Mrs. Worthington's attention became deeply riveted upon a certain portion of the contents of the pamphlet, when the attorney, who had been very actively engaged in writing, suddenly looked up and remarked:—"Well Emily dear, you must have something of importance claiming your attention at present. Come, tell me what it is all about;" continuing, after a short pause, during which time he was placing some law books upon an upper shelf of his writing desk, he said: "I am truly glad, Emily, you do not let any thing ruffle the easy tenor of your life, though it may be, you do trouble more than I really think you do."



Mrs. Worthington's reply to the above was as follows: "I chanced to pick up one of the present monthly magazines, and have become deeply interested in a story which it contains, dating back to the time of the old colonial days of Virginia, and relative to those early English characters, containing much daring, and with a good plot embodied; and, as to trouble, John, I do not believe in courting that; but I do feel deeply interested in the welfare of my little family." Here she paused for a while, carelessly thumbing the leaves of the book, while Mr. Worthington remained silent with forehead resting upon the thumb and fingers of his left hand. Finally, Mrs. Worthington was first to break the silence. She said: "Well, I think God knows the inmost secrets of the breast, and will watch over the destinies of every family, our only obligation being to trust in Him, conscientiously discharging our duty, bravely admonishing those who are prone to do evil, to shun the shadow of the clouds of impending danger. I feel happy indeed, and am truly proud of my family."

"Yes, that is true, Emily; but how about our little ones? Their daily training, cares, wants; and are they well?" Without waiting for reply he added: "They are under your care and keeping all day. How they

*Mr. Worthington's Palatial Residence.* 11

greeted me this evening! They seem to be perfectly well." Mrs. Worthington replied: "As to the children, they are all enjoying the very best of health. Why, John, what has caused you to be so solicitous of their welfare? You know I hardly trust them out of my sight. The dear little darlings, how they brighten our home!"

"Yes indeed, yes indeed, Emily," replied Mr. Worthington, as he rose from his chair and began pacing to and fro upon the floor, his eyes resting upon the carpet, at the same time nodding his head in affirmation; continuing he added, "and my earnest wish is that the present clear placid current of their lives may never be disturbed by the billows of some great agonizing trouble, from which it cannot be pacified. In my profession, Emily, I see so much to harrow the mind; so many grievances; so much strife, contention, and misery. Oh, that the lives of my children be ever free from those heart-piercing thrusts of anguish, which dethrone reason, and makes bodily wrecks of human beings!"

"Why, John, what makes you talk thus? What strange incident has been brought to your notice, that you speak in this manner?" While Mrs. Worthington was thus interrogating her husband, he still kept pacing

from the library door, thence back to the writing desk, continuing to do so for some time, without replying; but, finally resuming his seat at the writing desk, he gazed intently out of the large mullion window, the only one in the library and looking eastward.

All the time, Mrs. Worthington sat quietly waiting a reply. Finally turning on his swivel chair, and facing Mrs. Worthington he said, reiterating a former statement: "It may be, Emily, you do trouble more than I think you do."

"Well, John, why do you think so?" said Mrs. Worthington.

"Emily, I wish to speak to you in reference to our daughter Eva; indeed, I have been thinking of it for the past week or more; some things are weighing heavily on my mind, and there must certainly be, at least some degree of relaxation, before I can proceed further in my legal labors."

"Why, John, I am actually surprised; what do you mean?"

"I mean that she is walking on the very edge of ruin and dishonor, when she invites and encourages the attentions and company of this man."

"Why, to whom do you refer?" asked Mrs. Worthington.

"I refer to the one who calls to see Eva occasionally, and who claims himself to be a lawyer. I see he is presuming to press his desires, and win the affections of our daughter, Eva. Is he still as persistent as ever? Has he been here to-day, or has Eva been to the city within the last two or three days?"

Mrs. Worthington evidently knew to whom her husband referred, for although Mr. Worthington had not, as yet, mentioned any name, she made answer to the above fusillade of questions by saying: "She has not been to the city for a week, and he has not been here very recently."

The learned attorney now said: "Do you know Emily, that he is nothing more or less than a fraud; a man of no principle, but fully capable of luring our daughter on to think him some one: (pause) and for what (striking his fist on the desk), if it be not for the purpose of some day looking forward to the opportunity of handling Eva's portion of the estate?" Here there came another pause of short duration, after which Mr. Worthington added; "and once winning the confidence and affections of Eva, who knows what he would——;" and without finishing the sentence, the attorney began writing. Mrs. Worthington did not reply immediately, but closed the pamphlet and gazed

gravely at the floor. Some little time after, the attorney drew from one of the upper shelves of his writing desk a book on evidence. Finally, Mrs. Worthington remarked: "I've been thinking, as I told you some time ago that it would be a good plan, to have Eva take another trip to her aunt's home in Cleveland; for, the first one, last summer did seem to have such an exhilarating effect upon her. It may have a tendency to ameliorate present matters, for he does seem so persistent in his attentions."

The husband immediately replied:—"Now Emily, it might be a good plan, providing you would accompany Eva;" and after taking off his glasses, and wheeling around in his chair, until he sat facing Mrs. Worthington, he further added; "now, if Eva, after being duly warned of the consequences, shall still permit that rascal to come here, and intend marrying him, I shall just fix matters in regard to her; that he may never have one dollar of the estate to squander; thereby bringing disgrace and dishonor upon our family, and finally rendering her homeless and an outcast." The lawyer now arose and began again pacing the floor, as he said in tones of deep determination, "no Emily, I shall never give my consent to their marriage. He has written me a letter, purporting his intentions of

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*Mr. Worthington's Palatial Residence.* 15

marrying her, and now, Emily, this whole affair must be speedily brought to a close."

At this juncture, there came a knock at the door of the library; so Mrs. Worthington, without replying immediately prepared to leave the room. To the attorney's cordial "come in," the door opened, and a gentleman stepped in, just as Mrs. Worthington began to withdraw from the room, and, as she stepped towards the door, she gave a casual glance at the gentleman and immediately realized that he was a stranger to her, but evidently well known to Mr. Worthington, who addressed him upon entering with; "good evening Mr. Roland. This, Mr. Worthington said just as she was closing the door.

## CHAPTER II.

### A STRANGER ENTERS.

AT about 7 o'clock of the same evening, a carriage was seen by Mrs. Worthington from an upstairs window, to drive up directly in front of the Worthington mansion. The carriage was stopped on the public highway, which ran not more than one hundred yards from Mr. Worthington's residence.

There were some few moments of delay, during which time there seemed to be a conversation going on between the person who had alighted and some one inside the carriage. Mrs. Worthington, from her position, could see that the one who had alighted on the arrival of the vehicle, was madly gesticulating, as the conversation proceeded. By and by, the stranger withdrew, and approached towards the house.

Mrs. Worthington readily recognized the figure to be that of a man, and by his manner he seemed to be greatly agitated with excitement; for now and then he nervously would cast furtive glances, first toward the carriage, and then at the house.

Once he was seen to hesitate, and with uplifted hands, actually seemed to be petitioning Divine help; as if in the attitude of prayer.

Mrs. Worthington could not get a very distinct view of his facial features, and, would indeed, have given the stranger no further notice whatever, had it not been for his strange actions.

These alone, challenged her attention; for, it was not unusual to see almost every evening, carriage after carriage, drive up in front or near the attorney's residence, containing clients, seeking the advice of this very eminent lawyer. The stranger proceeded up the fine gravel walk or drive, and passed up the steps, leading to the elegant and spacious veranda. After a wait of a few moments, during which time Mrs. Worthington not hearing the ringing of the door bell, decided to raise the window a little, which she did, and as she did so, she heard a succession of incoherent words issuing from the veranda beneath.

She listened intently for some time, but could hear nothing. At last the spell is broken by an expression which she thought to be uttered in the nature of a threat; for said the stranger just before ringing the door bell; "he must yield and destroy that paper, or—" and without finishing the sentence, he pulled the door



bell violently. This soon summoned Miss Eva Worthington, who had been reading in the reception room, adjoining the great hall, leading directly to the front entrance. Upon opening the door, the stranger bowed courteously, at the same time remarking; "Is Mr. Worthington in?" Miss Eva said, in her kind gentle tone of refinement;—"yes sir." Then, said the stranger:—"I should be pleased to see him upon some legal matter." "Very well, just a moment;" said the daughter, and she stepped gracefully, although with an air of stately womanhood to the door of her father's library, which was situated on the other side of the hall, and directly opposite the reception room.

She found the library door open, and from the hall announced to her papa, that a gentleman was waiting in front, and wished to converse with him upon some legal matter. She saw that her father was engaged in writing, as she made the announcement, but he told Miss Eva to direct the gentleman in.

She stepped to the front door again, and kindly directed the stranger to her father's library, after which she gently closed the door behind him and walked across the hall, entering the reception room; from there she passed on into the grand old parlor, the furniture, tap

estry, and ornamentation of which, had long been noted and recognized to be the very finest that money could purchase.

This imposing, unassuming, and accomplished young lady had donned an elegant evening attire, scrupulously avoiding all affectation by the addition of superfluous toggery; her extreme beauty not requiring it, besides her keen sense of comfort did not approve of it.

The general routine of the evening in question, was as usual, there being nothing out of the ordinary, but indeed, such an evening as the closing hours had witnessed in this grand old home for months, and even years. While seated upon a small divan in the parlor, looking over some new sheet music, which she intended playing on the piano, Mrs. Worthington appeared at the parlor door. She had withdrawn from her position upstairs, and had noiselessly stolen upon her daughter, unaware, for the purpose of interviewing her concerning the person whom she had seen act so strangely; and, very naturally entertained some grave apprehension that all was not right. Mrs. Worthington related to her daughter the facts in part concerning the stranger, when Mabel and Howard came running into the room, anxiously seeking their mamma, and sister;

for they both had seen something back in the great woods that day, which, in their very hilarious state of mind, wished to relate; one telling it in part, when the other would take it up; and so on, their cheeks all aglow, and their eyes flashing with merriment.

Finally when this outburst of childish innocence had partially subsided, the daughter Miss Eva, told her mamma that she need give herself no fear, whatever, and reasoned that it was just some one engaged in a suit at law; and, had consequently come in to seek her papa's advice. The consoling daughter argued with much eloquence, that this was an every evening occurrence, and told her mamma, she felt proud of her papa's abilities in his chosen profession; calling in people from all the walks of life, from the honest hard working countryman, to the millionaire. Mrs. Worthington almost invariably sought her daughter Eva's advice and opinion, touching matters giving her much concern, and indeed, was in the habit of accepting her word as law, learning to respect it; for the past had fully exemplified its correctness. The daughter, too, had always been very judicious and convincing in her advice to her mamma; so, in this instance, as usual, Mrs. Worthington, after receiving this assurance, dismissed all fears at once from her mind, and left the parlor,

saying that she was going back to the study to finish reading an article upon which she had begun when attracted by the queer actions of the stranger; she then hurriedly left the room, followed by Mabel, Howard having chosen to remain in the parlor with his sister.

After Mrs. Worthington had taken her departure Miss Eva stepped to the piano and began playing. Being an accomplished pianist, she was soon making the old mansion fairly ring with the rapturous music. After performing the first selection, she was busying herself in looking for another, when she heard loud talking in her father's library, as if a very heated discussion was in progress. This, she did not deem uncommon; so, placing another sheet before her, she again began playing.

It was a very lively schottische, and when she ceased the second time, she could hear no talking going on as before; so she concluded that the stranger had gone, and immediately began playing another piece, this time one of her favorite waltzes.

It was quite long, being interspersed with the most charming variations, and on concluding this piece, she was again seeking one more, when she was summoned to tea by the ringing of the bell at the far end of the hall, towards the dining room. She at once left this

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elegantly furnished room, passing again through the reception room; thence down the hall, and into the large and spacious dining room; the walls of which were here and there adorned and decorated with various pictures given more to the humorous and mirthful side of life rather than to the sentimental. The table now stood ready for the evening repast. In this festive room, now sat Mrs. Worthington, her daughter Eva, and the two younger children, Mabel and Howard, all anxiously waiting for Mr. Worthington to appear. After waiting a few minutes, during which time the children became somewhat restless, and were furnishing amusement for both Mrs. Worthington and Eva, the servant girl again opened the door leading from the dining room into the hall, and rang the bell the second time, the silvery chimes of which rang out clear and reverberant; the sound penetrating every recess and room in the house. After this there was a wait of probably five minutes, when Eva calmly, and with much composure arose, and walked to the door of her father's library.—She listened a moment before turning the door-knob, not wishing to interrupt or intrude, knowing that her father had often been dilatory before, in responding when urgent business was at hand; so she thought there was nothing strange or

unnatural about this. But after listening a little while, and hearing nothing, save a low growl of the kind old watch-dog somewhere without, she called kindly the one word ; "papa !" There came no response, as usual, and without opening the door, she concluded that her papa was out in front, and gaily tripped to the front door, leading on to the veranda, at the same time calling gleefully ; "papa ! papa ! come, we are all waiting—" To this, she heard no reply, and stood on the very edge of the veranda, peering out into the deep darkness that had now entirely enveloped all without. She stood there a little while longer, with head inclined ready to catch any voice that might issue from towards the road ; as she well knew her father was quite frequently inclined to walk down the drive to the front gate, with his clients.

After listening in vain to hear her father's voice, she hastily retraced her footsteps, again stopping at the library door. Here she hesitated and faltered while her hand was on the door-knob. A chill of fear now crept over the frame of this noble girl, driving the life-giving blood from her cheeks. The beams of truthfulness, honesty, and merriment which had always radiated from those kind, brown eyes, were now displaced by those of fear, anxiety, and sad premonition. She

now remembered what brought her mother to her side in the parlor; but while in this depressed state of mind and body, she heard footsteps approaching. Nearer they came; finally, they were heard upon the veranda, and momentarily her fear subsided; but, upon turning she saw that the person approaching was not her father, whom she expected to see.

### CHAPTER III.

**"ETERNITY!—THE VEIL WILL BE WITHDRAWN.—  
ETERNITY!"**

"WELL, good evening, Miss Eva," said the gentleman kindly, and in a soft, delicate tone, as he stood in the open door-way, at the same time removing his hat. After this salutation on the part of the stranger, he approached nearer, by entering the hall, and after drawing a white linen handkerchief from one of the lower pockets in his frock coat, and wiping the perspiration from off his forehead, he said: "Why, Miss Eva, I thought your papa had told me some time ago, that you were going to Cleveland, and I expected you had taken your departure ere this." By way of reply, Eva said: "No Mr. Hinckle, I have concluded not to go, there being other matters claiming my attention just at present;" continuing, and without showing any signs of previous agitation, for she possessed a wonderful power of self-possession; being rather disposed to look upon the bright side, even in the face of forebodings that evinced the most imminent peril, and



never yielding until the adversities of actual realities were met, she added: "did you see or meet papa, as you came in?" "I did not," said Mr. Hinckle, spoken in a low, calm tone, and indicative of some surprise. "Then where can he be? We have twice rang the bell for him, and I have called repeatedly from the veranda."

"Is he not in the library?" asked Mr. Hinckle. "I think——" here Eva's voice changed to a tremble, as she pleadingly said: "Oh, Mr. Hinckle, you step into the library, please, I fear——," and here her voice became choked with emotion. "Why certainly I will; what is it you fear?" responded Mr. Hinckle, as he stepped toward the door, Eva just then, having retreated to the dining room; and, she heard Mr. Hinckle call. He said: "Eva! Eva! come quick, your father must be sick," then approaching somewhat nearer, and bowing on one knee, and bending over Mr. Worthington he said: "*I believe he is dead!*"

Eva, who had stepped from the dining room back into the hall, had overheard Mr. Hinckle's last utterance, and with a wild shriek she called to her mamma, and then rushed toward the library. Mrs. Worthington came hastily, followed by the two children, and the servant girl. Mr. Hinckle had found the attorney

lying upon the floor by the side of the writing desk; thus giving rise to his utterance on entering and upon advancing nearer, the ejaculation: "I believe he is dead!"

Mrs. Worthington approached her husband, and kneeling down beside him, thought at once that the spark of life had fled, for she said: "Oh, John, what can this mean?"—here words failed her, and she sobbed piteously while the daughter who had entertained grave fears, only to be quickened by Mr. Hinckle's startling declaration and the subsequent distress and deep anguish of Mrs. Worthington, now reeled and fell upon the large lounge, burying her face in her hands.

Mrs. Worthington, by this time, had fainted over the seemingly dead body of her husband, while the two little children looked on in innocent wonder and amazement; for even Mabel, who was the older and stood nearer, could not realize the situation; but,—

"Her father's step, her father's kiss,  
Will never greet her more."

It was now Mr. Hinckle's time to act, so he immediately ordered the servant girl to inform the coach-

man to go at once for Dr. Druid, who lived only a short distance towards the city, and on the opposite side of the public highway. The girl was quick in responding, for she ran to the back kitchen door and called loudly to the coachman, who was at that time in the stable, engaged in his usual evening work.

Lest she should make matters worse, she told him in tones of suppressed excitement that something dreadful had happened to Mr. Worthington, and for him to go at once for Dr. Druid.

He did so, without any questioning, or delay, actually running into the pump with tremendous force, in his extreme haste; and, in less than ten minutes the physician rang the door-bell and was at once ushered into the lawyer's library. By this time, Mrs. Worthington had regained consciousness, and was sitting in an easy and comfortable rocking chair where Mr. Hinckle had contrived to lead her. The daughter was now kneeling down beside the prostrate form of her father. She gave one wild shriek, and then said: "papa!" just as the doctor came through the doorway leading into the library. Eva had perceived her father breathing, and, as the doctor approached she shrieked again; this time, trembling with unreserved excitement and emotion. She called: "papa! papa!" but her father made no

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reply. By this time, the physician had hold of the wounded man's wrist, for the purpose of exploring his pulse. He saw at once that the attorney was shot, as his head was lying in a pool of blood, some of which had already coagulated upon the carpet; forming a clot, around which the carpet was soaked with the life-giving blood of the great attorney. The doctor could distinguish a faint pulsation, and at once assured the family that the lawyer was still living. He immediately began to administer restoratives. The window had been raised, and the lounge, which was a large folding one, was rapidly prepared for a bed. In a few moments the doctor, Mr. Hinckle, and the coachman, had placed the dying man upon it. Both the doctor and Mr. Hinckle, heroically endeavored to console the grieving wife and daughter; but all in vain. The daughter was raving with grief, while Mrs. Worthington had reached the stage of perfect collapse; her whole nervous system having completely given way. They all hovered near, anxiously waiting for returning consciousness; it having been assured them by the doctor, although this small particle of encouragement was somewhat strained on the part of the doctor; however, to his great surprise it did come, but alas, only for a moment.

The renowned lawyer, in whose pierced brain there flitted one ray of returning consciousness, now spoke but one sentence; said in a clear, distinct, and impressive tone, while his dimmed eyes wandered for a moment; but, finally gazed steadfastly into the face of Mrs. Worthington, his ever faithful and beloved wife. The dying man, over whose eyes there was slowly gathering a soft film, said:—

*"Eternity! The Veil will be Withdrawn. Eternity!"*

His eyes then closed, and he passed off into a state of unconsciousness; only to awake in that great beyond,—“Eternity”,—the last word to pass his lips and which sealed them forever.

This kind, loving husband, and indulgent parent; this eminent attorney and counselor, now lay a corpse, surrounded by those to whom his life was dear; but whose happiness was now shattered and crumbled, like the fallen fragments of some ancient ruin. The doctor now turned his attention to Mrs. Worthington and Eva; for their deep and unbroken sorrow seemed to be overwhelming, and unless allayed or pacified in some manner from this first shock, there might still follow more serious consequences. Mr. Hinckle, who it will be well to state, was a detective of no mean

ability; for he had been considered one among the best in his profession. It was no uncommon affair for him to come to the district attorney's home for further orders and advice, when tracing criminals; much less, for the mutual exchange of opinions, touching their business relations; this opportune arrival on the part of Mr. Hinckle seemed to corroborate the statement, that the vengeance of Heaven is ever upon the head of the guilty, and the way of the transgressor is a hard one.

Mr. Hinckle now dropped every thing else that had been claiming his attention, and began active preparations; acting solely on his own volition; for the tongue of the noted attorney was now silent. With stolid and rigid countenance, he paced to and fro through the wide hall, for a few moments, and in the presence of the doctor swore vengeance to the guilty, who had ever dared to perpetrate such an atrocious deed. After kindly speaking a few words of consolation to both Miss Eva, and Mrs. Worthington, and notifying the doctor to let things remain just as they were, allowing no one to move anything in the library which had now been converted into a death chamber, Mr. Hinckle hastily withdrew, and was driven to the city, and directly to the office of the Chief of Police. To the

Chief, Mr. Meryle, he made known the facts, after which the Chief detailed him at once upon the case. Mr. Hinckle now had due authority to act, and after some further consultation, he left the Chief's office, coming, without any delay straight to the scene of the tragedy; arriving there just one hour and twenty minutes after his departure.

He bagen, at once, searching for clues. The detective, as has been previously intimated, was no novice in his capacity. He had just succeeded in unraveling a great plot which had been extremely difficult and intricate from the start; and at all events, had only come to seek further orders from the district attorney. This new case now afforded him immediate work, and being such a notable personage, as the esteemed and very able attorney, would naturally enough spur him on with redoubled determination to find the guilty, and bring a balance to the scales of justice; so this case gave promise to become quite interesting. Mr. Hinckle was a man of medium height, robust in stature when walking at ease; eyes, of steel gray tinge; body perfectly symmetrical, and in short, possessing a physique of no common proportion, and fully capable of enduring that from which many others would instinctively

shrink. This noble looking man now assumed entire charge of the premises, being robed in legal authority, and fully capable and able to act under all circumstances.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CLUES.

ON arriving from the chief's office, Mr. Hinckle found the doctor waiting in the hall. The doctor had sent the coachman to his home with the request that Mrs. Druid, wife of the physician, and sister of Mrs. Worthington, come immediately to the Worthington mansion. Some other women residing in the immediate neighborhood were also called in. This was done in order to calm, if possible, Mrs. Worthington and the daughter, whose grief was beyond control.

During the night the coroner, Mr. Grant, was summoned. This was done after Mr. Hinckle had visited the chief's office; and the coroner put in an appearance soon after the arrival of Mr. Hinckle. Mr. Grant immediately began an investigation, assisted by Mr. Hinckle.

They examined the wound very carefully, and concluded that it was the result of a pistol shot, probably held in the hand of an assassin; for, existing evidences did not point to suicide. They further found that the


hair and surface of the wound were not, at all blackened, as most likely would have resulted, had the weapon been held directly against the head or nearly so. This corroborated the theory that the shot must have been fired at some distance away; thereby greatly weakening the possibility of suicide. The coroner chose to remain until morning, and Mr. Hinckle had prevailed on the doctor to also remain, thinking that he would be of some aid in the investigation, relative to matters touching the wound itself; the surroundings; effects, and in short that he might be able to more easily draw inferences from the opinion of the skillful doctor.

Mr. Hinckle did not at this time deem it wise to interrogate either Mrs. Worthington or Eva; so he began a close scrutiny on his own behalf in order to find some definite clue. He was assisted in his search by both Mr. Grant and the doctor, choosing to make the doctor a sort of confidant.


The body was left lying on the lounge. The coroner had now turned all over to Mr. Hinckle who was clothed with supreme power to act. Mr. Hinckle first examined the vicinity of the writing desk, by which the noted attorney must have been sitting, when the fatal shot was fired. Even the swivel chair was turned

a little to the left, just as the attorney had apparently left it when he fell forward on the carpet after receiving his death wound.

Mr. Hinckle had chanced to notice a sheet of legal cap lying on the writing desk; this, he had pointed out to the doctor. The paper was referred to by Mr. Hinckle at a very critical moment, when at the same time he remarked to the doctor that the contents of the paper might have some bearing upon the case. Only a momentary reference was made of it at the time, however, as the discovery was made immediately following the death of attorney Worthington, and when the family's grief was unbounded; so Mr. Hinckle merely called the doctor to one side, and showed him the paper, after which he folded it without taking time to read; the sobs and extreme grief of the relatives forbidding any such action at this juncture. Mr. Hinckle carefully placed the folded sheet into his inside coat pocket. The detective was not at all backward in confiding his thoughts and conclusions to Dr. Druid and Coroner Grant, thus resolving their communications into a kind of mutual exchange of opinions. They next closely examined the writing desk. Then they looked around to see if there were any evidences of a struggle having taken place; but no blood could



be found upon the wall, or upon any article in the room, except on the carpet where the blood had reddened it, forming a figure somewhat like that of an ellipse. Nothing in the room seemed to be disheveled in the least, as might have ensued from a struggle; therefore, the pile of clot and blood that had soaked into the carpet, where the head was resting when the wounded attorney was found by Mr Hinckle, with not the least evidence of self-defense, spoke but too plainly that the attorney was very likely the victim of premeditated murder and probably not even cognizant of the approach of his destroyer. They further ascertained that after being shot, the attorney had not struggled out of the position he had assumed upon falling from the chair; for the blood, as before stated, had formed an ellipse, the shortest diameter of which was not over six inches, with the blood clot on the left side of the oval, and contiguous to the wound in the back part of the head. Mr. Hinckle also found the pen, with which the attorney had been previously writing, had rolled down the slanting lid of the desk, and precipitated itself upon the floor, giving evidence that the fatal' shot must have been fired while Mr. Worthington was writing or holding the pen in his hand.



They could distinctly trace the course of the descent of the pen, as it rolled down the lid after leaving the hand of the lawyer, for little blotches of ink were left upon the lid of the desk, being distributed almost in the form of a semi-circle. Upon picking up the pen, there could even yet be seen a faint trace of ink, upon the upper part of the pen point where the ink had adhered more heavily. Mr. Hinckle and his two associates had arrived at the conclusion, and settled beyond doubt to their minds, that there had been no struggle between the attorney and his assailant. They did not ransack the drawers of the writing desk, deciding to wait until morning, when this could be done by permission of Mrs. Worthington, this being a point of courtesy, and suggested by Mr. Hinckle himself, however, they were busy in the meantime gathering clues.

All, had observed the importance of the open window on the right of the writing desk. One could have committed the shocking deed, made good his escape through the open window, by passing out through the yard unobserved. After gathering all the evidence possible other than might be hidden within the drawers of the writing desk, they now sit down to talk matters over.

Mr. Hinckle gently closed the door, leading into the hall, and in the presence of the dead man, if whose lips could only open, and silvery tongue speak once again, the veil of mystery would be rent asunder, and the rays of truth and certainty would beam through, falling upon the face of the guilty. As these men of very different profession sat thus revolving the facts in their minds, and talking in low subdued tones, they heard a startling cry of deep anguish; and, the next moment Eva and Mrs. Worthington were led into the library. The kind neighbor women, who had so willingly proffered their assistance, each really accomplishing the work of a heroine by their efforts in consoling the bereaved, were unable to resist and deny the wishes of the faithful wife and daughter to see again the face of the beloved husband and father. Only to look upon that face again, before the sun of another day would cast his beams of emotion and pity upon the stricken home; for, just in the proportion of ignominy, villainy and criminality committed on the one hand, just in that same proportion do we see on the other, that which is the indicator and very embodiment of strength, bowing in humility, and sorrow; as strong men are known to weep tears of patriotism; tears of love; tears of regret. To only

speak to him; to only press her lips to his once more as she did in the early part of the evening, upon his return from the city:—but now it was almost impossible for them to realize that those lips, from which there had issued so many kind words of love and guidance, were forever sealed. Those kind but searching eyes, that had watched over the interests of this happy family, would never again sparkle with the glad joy of greeting. The scene was affecting in the extreme. Mr. Hinckle, filled with deep emotion sat gazing pityingly into the faces of Mrs. Worthington and daughter; but, finally left and paced to and fro in the hall to conceal his deep agitation. The doctor tried to soothe, by kind words of condolence, also, the kind women put forth almost superhuman efforts to temporarily assuage the deep distress, for they could not be even tempted to leave the body. Finally, Mrs. Worthington again fainted, and was carried from the room.

Eva now seemed to suddenly realize the situation and became more composed. She, also left with friends, her extreme grief now giving way to fear, caused by Mrs. Worthington's precarious condition. Mrs. Worthington was carried into the parlor, and gently laid on a couch. Dr. Druid administered re-

storatives, but to no avail; for Mrs. Worthington continued in the state in which she was taken from the library, and there were no signs of returning consciousness after the first hour had elapsed.

The doctor said Mrs. Worthington's condition was solely due to nervous prostration, caused from extreme grief, and that she would rally later on.

It was now about four o'clock and some little time after Dr. Druid had departed, that Mr. Hinckle and the coroner repaired to the library. They were closeted there, at least half an hour, earnestly discussing the situation; and it was while seated there, that Mr. Hinckle suddenly remembered the sheet of legal cap which he had placed into his pocket without reading during the emotional excitement and grief of Mrs. Worthington and Eva.

He now drew it from his pocket, and upon unfolding, he found it to read as follows:

This, my last will and testament:—

*At my death, it is my wish that my  
wife Mrs. Emily Worthington, have and control  
all my property, both personal and realty.*



during the time my younger children, Mabel and Howard, shall not have attained to the age of majority: but after which time, the property to be divided as follows: one third to go to my wife, Mrs. Emily Westington; two ninths to go to my younger daughter, Mabel; two ninths to go to my son Howard: As the remaining two ninths, I bequeath to my daughter Eva, but on condition that she marry some

The two men gazed at each other with pallid countenances. They had, indeed, made a great discovery. The person answering to the name about to be written in the will must know something of the hideous crime. It was Mr. Grant who first spoke; for said he to Mr. Hinckle: "Well, what do you think of it Mr. Hinckle?" Mr. Hinckle thought awhile, before answering, his mind being very deeply engrossed in fixing past associations; also, the vital connection of the name about to be written with the last stroke of the pen, that was

ever made by the attorney, as evidenced by the ink still being on the lid of the writing desk, and also on the pen point.

Finally, Mr. Hinckle said: "It looks very dark, indeed, for the one representing this relationship with Miss Eva Worthington; still, after establishing his identity, if a warrant should be issued for his arrest, it would be merely on circumstantial evidence. The mere fact of connecting the name of this unknown person, with the writing of this document, which is of such interest to Miss Worthington, and her relations with this unknown man, making her inheritance presumably conditional and bearing upon a future contingency, is not *prima facie* evidence of guilt; but fully sufficient for us to take legal steps in the premise, for investigation, and as much as duty demands. I must admit, however, that this is the first real clue to fall under our notice."

After some further conversation, consisting merely of speculative assertions, the coroner having other work that demanded his immediate attention, left and was driven to the nearest street car line, Mr. Hinckle remaining at the home of the deceased attorney.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE MORN.

AT the Worthington mansion the next morning, after the mysterious discovery, signs of activity and bustle were early made manifest on the part of the servants, and those kind neighbors who had so willingly responded in this time of deep mourning and adversity. There was to be seen a mute sadness in the faces and actions of all those who went to and from this home, over which the very air seemed to be hanging heavily in sorrowful stillness. Not a leaf could be seen to quiver, so solemnly silent was the stillness. The outlines of the neighboring woods were but faintly visible, from which beautiful and continuous strains of music issued as if from some great orchestra; for the feathery tribe was beginning to make the welkin ring with their matin songs of joy and gladness; and indeed, all nature seemed to be waking from the last sombre shades of night, in utter contradistinction to, and perfectly oblivious of, the terrible gloom, that hung over and about the beautiful home

of the deceased attorney, and shrowding the hearts of the bereft. As Mr. Hinckle sat in the library, gazing from the window out of which the criminal must have escaped, his vision met a clump of willows, some three or four hundred yards distant. These alone seemed to be touched by the tenderest cords of sympathy, for their long sweeping branches almost touched the ground, as if in a state of humble adoration and reverence for the dead and distressed.

After gazing from the window for a short time, Mr. Hinckle's thoughts finally reverted to the attorney's dying words: "Eternity! The Veil will be withdrawn.—Eternity!" As he thus alone sat pondering, a thrill of emotion passed over the frame of this strong man, which caused his eyes to well with tears, and his lips quiver with deep sorrow, as he thought how true those mighty words! That the veil which shields crime, guilt, rage, and jealousy, eternity shall soon cast aside, revealing the monster in his mad rushes, and piercing shrieks to escape his awful doom.

After this outburst of emotion, Mr. Hinckle now arose and withdrew from the library, passing through the hall, and into the dining room, where he had been summoned to breakfast, prepared by the servant girl. As he sat at the table, there could have been traced

upon his haggard countenance, the ravages of but one night's sleeplessness and profound mental exertion. He deemed it expedient to first interview Miss Eva, whom he intended to seek after the morning repast. He now seemed to think it was time to act and to act vigorously. In the presence of the servant girl, he jotted down a few points which furnished him material for work, the most important being that of the sheet of legal cap, which we will denominate as the unfinished will of Attorney Worthington.

Mr. Hinckle, also had in his possession another very important piece of evidence, that he had, as yet, disclosed to only one. The reader will remember that Mr. Hinckle upon his entry into the hall was appealed to by Eva, while she was standing in front of her father's library door, overtaken by the sudden premonition of fear, precipitated by what her mother had told her while seated in the parlor; repeating her words: "Oh, Mr. Hinckle, you step into the library please, I fear——." It will also be remembered that Mr. Hinckle did so at once, while Eva, chilled with fear, glided down the hall, and was just passing through the doorway leading into the dining room, when she heard Mr. Hinckle's ejaculation in clear and active tones; "Eva! Eva! come quick your father

must be sick," and as he stepped toward the attorney's form lying prostrate upon the floor, his eyes caught sight of a weapon, lying upon the lid of the writing desk.

This discovery evidently prompted him to add in tones of more emphasis and pathos, "I believe he is dead!" Mr. Hinckle had taken the liberty to pick up the weapon, and place it into his pocket, before any one had come into the library. Acting upon his own volition, he decided to keep the pistol and hold it as evidence. He had told the chief of this important find and had actually produced it while at the chief's office. Both Chief Meryle and Mr. Hinckle considered it very important, the chief permitting Mr. Hinckle to keep the weapon in his possession; thinking in his further investigation it might be of value to him.

Mr. Hinckle had permitted the coroner to depart, without a knowledge of the pistol, for he was one who had but recently been elected; so, Mr. Hinckle deemed it best not to confide the fact of the discovery of the pistol to too many, lest it might possibly reach the press. He therefore thought it fully sufficient that the chief and he were aware of this discovery, at least, for a day or two, when it could all be disclosed at the inquest.

Chief Meryle, in reviewing what Mr. Hinckle had informed him, decided that it seemed very much like suicide; but Mr. Hinckle answered by saying: "while it does show some indications of suicide, yet there is weighty evidence to the contrary, in as much, (1) there was no known reason why the distinguished attorney, surrounded by his happy family, should be inclined to commit such an atrocious crime, and in his own home: (2) that the pistol was found in such a position, as not to warrant a deed of self destruction: (3) that the window to the right of the writing desk was found lifted, however, the mere fact of the lower sash being found lifted would not create very great suspicion, as the evening was extremely warm and sultry; but, the simple fact that the window was there in reality, being the only one in the library, and which would furnish an easy means of entrance or exit. In the short time in which Mr. Hinckle remained in the chief's office, these points were rapidly reviewed, and it was not until his return to the home of the deceased, that more thorough investigation took place; although, somewhat interrupted by the sad condition of affairs, every member of the household, even to the servants, seemed deeply affected. Even the faithful old watch-dog was heard to bark viciously in the

back yard, during certain intervals of the long gloomy night, concluding by howling most mournfully; as if the horrible fate of his master must be avenged, and at the same time, tendering messages of condolence by his mournful lamentations. Mr. Hinckle, upon finishing his meal, now arose and walked gently to the great parlor, passing through the spacious hallway, just as he could distinctly hear the muffled, cathedral sound of a clock, striking the hour of seven, in a distant upper room. This caused Mr. Hinckle's countenance to become fixed and rigid with determination, remembering that the wheels of time will surely bring discovery and retribution to the guilty.

Mrs. Worthington, had by this time, as the doctor had prophesied, regained consciousness; so Mr. Hinckle passed on through the reception room and into the parlor. His entrance was the signal for another outburst of deep emotion on the part of Mrs. Worthington. After assuring her and the daughter Eva, that he would not rest until the guilty be apprehended and summarily dealt with, and finding it perfectly useless to attempt an interview with either the daughter or Mrs. Worthington, he departed, saying in substance that he would call in later, when he hoped to find them more composed; for he briefly stated that



there were a few missing links, which were needed in the chain of evidence; and, he thought they might be able to furnish information, filling the deficiency. Mr. Hinckle then left, and passing on into the kitchen, was soon engaged in conversation with the servant girl. She was quite intelligent; much more than one would suspect, of a person in her humble situation. Mr. Hinckle began, by stating that he was a detective, and wished to know how Mr. Worthington came to meet such an untimely death.

The girl replied by saying that she knew nothing about the horrible deed, and seemed on the eve of making another statement, when she suddenly stopped and began reflecting.—Mr. Hinckle noted this, but did not ply her further with questions, just at this juncture; preferring to await her own pleasure, for she seemed a trifle confused. Finally, she said that she remembered the dog had made considerable noise, barking and running furiously past the back kitchen door, and around to the side of the house on which the library is situated. Upon being questioned, she further stated that the dog was much inclined to be noisy; but, when Mr. Worthington was found dead in his library, caused from being shot, it was then that she connected the dog's actions with the circumstance.

Here she stopped, and tears welled to her eyes; her voice choked considerably, when she turned and looked out of the window. Mr. Hinckle saw that deep emotion had taken complete possession of her, so he ceased interrogating her, and seated himself upon a chair. While sitting there he again jotted down a few facts.

Finally, after this suppressed grief had partially subsided, Mr. Hinckle asked: "Could you tell about what time it was, that the dog made this disturbance, by barking; as if some one may have been intruding?" After a short pause she answered: "It was some time before I had rung the bell for supper." "Some time you say," remarked Mr. Hinckle; continuing he said: "Is there not some incident, that you may now recall, which will enable you to connect the actions of the dog with the time more definitely?" The girl thought earnestly for a while, then said: "Yes sir, I now remember that Mrs. Worthington came in and directed me to have the meal ready at half past seven, when upon glancing at the clock, I saw that it was just fifteen minutes until that time; and it was just after Mrs. Worthington had stepped back into the dining room that the dog ran past the kitchen door; for I was bringing in a bucket of water, and had just stepped upon the door step when it happened."

The servant girl had been with the Worthington family for at least ten years and had always been treated very kindly by every member of the household; furthermore, she was always promptly and well paid by Mr. Worthington. After some further interrogation, Mr. Hinckle passed from the back kitchen door, confidently assured that the servant girl could impart no further information touching upon the case. He wended his way down the gaveled walk toward the stable, where he expected to find the coachman. Upon glancing at his watch, as he was passing down the walk, he found it to be just twenty minutes after seven, and the coroner when he departed said he would be back not later than eight o'clock, in order to make arrangements for the inquest. Mr. Hinckle upon reaching the stable door, which was swung wide open, found the coachman actively engaged in currying a horse belonging to a match team, kept by the attorney, which was noted for their carriage and dignity of step and appearance for miles around. These ebony black chargers when robed in their silver-mounted harness, often caused pedestrians to stop and gaze, as they were passing by.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DENNIS THE COACHMAN.

DENNIS HUBERT was of Irish extract; quick, sagacious, and naturally disposed to be witty; but at the same time very conscientious and emphatic in all of his remarks and decisions. He had been in the employ of the Worthington family, fully as long, if not longer than the faithful old servant girl. He, too, had always been a trusted employe because of his very frugal and sober habits, and unflinching honesty and integrity; never failing upon any occasion to do the bidding of the esteemed attorney, always priding himself upon his punctuality in the faithful execution of his work. As Mr. Hinckle stepped in at the stable door, the coachman's face was turned from him, and when Mr. Hinckle passed through the open doorway and into the stable, the ever faithful old watch dog that had made himself heard so emphatically to the servant girl, the previous evening, now made himself quite conspicuous by giving a low growl of warning. The dog was lying upon some straw that had

been placed some distance back of the horses. This, of course, attracted the attention of Mr. Hubert, and upon looking around, Mr. Hinckle could readily see that his swollen eyes, and tired and worn expression upon his face, betokened much grief and mute sorrow, occasioned by the loss of his kind friend, for whom he had often battled through many a storm and the roughest days of cold and sleet upon his trips to and from the city. Mr. Hinckle realized that the coachman was, or had been much affected by the mysterious death of Attorney Worthington; at least, he seemed to be.

"Good morning;" said Mr. Hinckle, as the coachman turned around, his action being quickened by the low growl of the dog; for the lapse of ten years with the faithful old animal had well taught him the significance of the signal, given by his daily associate. The sun was now shining clear and brilliant; the sky was perfectly cloudless, and indeed it was a typical summer morning. After the coachman had returned Mr. Hinckle's salutation he stopped his work, and Mr. Hinckle remarked; "this is certainly a beautiful morning, Mr. Hubert." After receiving an answer in the affirmative, Mr. Hinckle saw that the coachman was not going to stop, but began brushing vigorously over

the back of the horse. Mr. Hinckle next said; "this, Mr. Hubert, is quite a sad occurrence." The coachman, upon giving the horse a few more strokes, after the statement said by Mr. Hinckle, suddenly turned again and said; "Oh yes, it does not seem possible that Mr. Worthington is dead there in the house." He now turned again and began to curry, but wheeling around more suddenly than before, he added: "If I only knew who did that work, it would be well for him to make himself scarce, for now while I loved and respected Mr. Worthington, it has at the same time jeopardized my position; one which I have held for the last ten years. I tell you, I have been treated like a gentleman in this family." After this outburst, Mr. Hubert again resumed his work, when Mr. Hinckle said: "Mr. Hubert, I am an officer, detailed upon this case, and if there is anything that you know concerning this crime, that would lead to the apprehension and conviction of the guilty, it behooves you to tell me at once." At this, the coachman paused, and stepping toward the officer, his eyes blood-shot and kindled with the fire of indignation, made the following reply: "My dear sir, listen to me,—just as sure as I stand here, face to face with you, with this right hand lifted in token of truthfulness to my God, that when I tell

you that I know nothing of this horrible crime, I utter to you words of truth; but, (and now with clinched fist he continued), I am willing to assist in avenging this deed, working night and day until my brain is powerless to act." He then grasped the detective by his right arm above the elbow which made a shiver pass over the frame of Mr. Hinckle, and when in his iron grasp, Mr. Hinckle said: "Please release your hold for you——;" but before the detective had uttered another word the coachman said as he looked straight into the eyes of Mr. Hinckle, "I must and will avenge this crime. He was my friend; dear as life to me, and if I had the one here who fired that fatal shot, his life would answer for it." These last statements were said in the boisterousness of extreme rage.

They came from the lips of a man who seemed to be frantic with madness. Never had Mr. Hinckle seen such dramatic resentment. Never could any actor impersonate and move an audience to such pathos, as was the detective, by the words which fell from his lips. It was, indeed, such a scene and meeting that no painter could portray with justice. Mr. Hinckle turned and gazed towards the wooded heights, that lay in the distance, and stood there trembling with

emotion ; while the coachman, whose voice could have been distinctly heard in clear, determined tones, to anyone who might have been passing, now sobbed bitterly and buried his face in a large bandana, which he had withdrawn from a pocket and was holding in his left hand. Never in all the experience of this distinguished and noted detective, did he see such resentment for the guilty, and devotion for the victim. Without either speaking another word, Mr. Hinckle walked rapidly up the drive, leading around to the east of the great mansion, while the coachman, with pallid countenance, stepped back and resumed his usual morning work.



## CHAPTER VII.

EVA WORTHINGTON.

MR. HINCKLE passed on upon the drive, until he reached the library window, situated upon the east side of the house, and as previously stated, the only one to the library. He examined the window-sill carefully and was seen to pick up something from the sill, which he afterwards wrapped carefully in a bit of paper and placed into his pocket-book. He next stooped over and investigated the lawn between the house and the drive, from directly under the window, a distance of probably not more than four or five feet. After scrutinizing for a few moments, he passed rapidly back to the kitchen door, and asked the servant girl for a bucket or pail of some kind. She handed him a milk crock, which he accepted. He passed back again to the library window, and after taking a measuring line from his pocket he inclined upon one knee, some three feet, directly in front of the window, and began using the line; first measuring, and then jotting something down in a little note-book. He

placed the milk crock inverted over the spot which he had been measuring, and then walked directly eastward crossing the drive, and upon the lawn, this time moving very slowly, and with bowed head, as if looking for some lost article, or something that might furnish a clue. Mr. Hinckle, after going some distance, hastily retraced his footsteps, back to the drive, and then passed around to the front and ascended the veranda steps; thence into the hall. Once in the hall he seated himself upon a large rustic seat, such as are used upon verandas, or in halls; and which will very conveniently accomodate two persons. He now thought that he would rest a few moments, while awaiting the arrival of Mr. Grant, having lost all of the previous night's sleep. He had not been seated there, however, more than ten minutes, with his head buried in his hands and apparently asleep, when there came a gentle ring at the door-bell. The ring, though gentle as it was, caused him to start. When the door-bell rang, Miss Eva was sitting in the reception room, and in the very chair she had occupied when the mysterious stranger of whom Mrs. Worthington had spoken, had entered the previous evening. Mr. Hinckle had not noticed her, for when he entered the hall he did not walk as far as the door leading into

the reception room. Had he known Eva was there he, no doubt, would have engaged her attention in conversation, if possible.

Mr. Hinckle rose to answer the summons just as Eva came through the door-way, and into the hall. Mr. Hinckle, seeing her kindly said, as she stood with tear-stained face; "If you please, Miss Eva, I will answer the call." Eva answered; "Please do so, Mr. Hinckle." Obeying the appeal, Mr. Hinckle stepped lightly toward the door and gently opened it, while the daughter, holding a tear-moistened kerchief to her eyes, passed back into the reception room. Upon opening the door, Mr. Hinckle said in a subdued tone: "Good morning, Mr. Grant." Mr. Grant nodded and stepped in, closing the door. Then they passed through the hall, arm in arm, until they reached the reception room door when they turned and entered. This door was situated directly opposite that of the library. They did not pass into the parlor, but after entering the reception room they walked to a front window looking out upon the front yard. They stood there awhile, discussing the situation, when all at once they heard a rustle behind them, and upon looking around there stood Eva Worthington. She was pale, and with countenance broken, and white lips she approached

and said; "Gentlemen, God and Heaven will reveal the slayer of my dear papa. This has wrought ruin to this once happy home," and then turning and shifting her position she added, at the same time wringing her hands in grief, "My dear papa! my dear papa! could you but wake!" and she walked towards the library door and dropping upon her knees, she wept bitterly. The two gentlemen decided to wait awhile before venturing to address her. Finally, Mr. Hinckle advanced and sat down upon a chair, that happened to be situated to the left, and very near the kneeling, penitent girl. He then unfolded a morning newspaper which Mr. Grant had brought with him from the city.

He found the headlines upon the first page, occupying the space of four columns, and reading as follows:

FOUL MURDER!

J. B. Worthington,

District Attorney, Shot in His

Own Library.

It May be Suicide, but Looks Like Murder. Detectives and Police Investigating.

Reports Corroborated and Again Denied.

After reading the above, Mr. Hinckle gazed at the

Coroner in amazement. He at once crossed over to where Mr. Grant was sitting and said in a calm, gentle, but emphatic tone of voice, "How came this occurrence to reach the press so soon?" Mr. Grant was as much surprised as Mr. Hinckle. There had been no reporter on the scene. The chief, himself, had demanded secrecy; at least for a while, and the doctor was told not to circulate any news concerning it. How then, did it reach the papers? This could not be accounted for. They proposed to investigate which could be done by interviewing the editor, who could very probably name the reporter who wrote it.

By this time Eva arose and was proceeding back to the parlor, where Mrs. Worthington had remained ever since the unhappy occurrence, the family and friends thinking it best not to remove her until she had somewhat recovered. She had, however, recovered from her second shock, but was too weak even to walk, caused from the severe nervous shock. The brave daughter, although heartbroken, had remained with or near her mother, rendering whatever assistance she could under the extremely difficult circumstances. Just as Eva had reached the door leading into the parlor, Mr. Hinckle now approached her and said: "Miss Worthington, we would be pleased to have a short

interview with you if it can be conveniently arranged without molesting or further grieving Mrs. Worthington or yourself." This was said very kindly and in a manner almost bordering upon a whisper, although the door leading into the parlor was closed.

To this, Eva said, as she glanced her dark eyes toward the detective; "If there's anything I can do or say, that may lead to the discovery and ultimate punishment of the wicked person, who so cruelly took my dear papa's life, I am only too willing to impart such information." Said Mr. Hinckle: "My friend here, Mr. Grant, is the coroner, and any one whom you could mention, that would be able to impart any information, leading to a solution of this mystery, it would be carefully noted by Mr. Grant and myself." Mr. Hinckle then suggested: "Before the conversation begins, probably, it would be well for us to retire to the hall, entirely out of the hearing of Mrs. Worthington." The suggestion was well received, and Eva readily acquiesced. They all then passed into the hall, taking seats near the front entrance. Said Mr. Hinckle, "Now, Miss Worthington, I am detailed upon this case, and as you no doubt know was a personal friend of your father. We are investigating the case." Here the daughter was overcome with grief. Finally, after the

emotion had somewhat subsided, Mr. Hinckle said: "Miss Worthington, can you now disclose any news in this matter, which, in your judgment, you think may prove beneficial to us in our investigations?"

Recovering again she bravely said: "Gentlemen, when papa came home last evening mamma and I went out on the veranda to greet him, as usual. He smiled and talked after he had lifted Mabel and Howard from the carriage." (Here she hesitated, being overwhelmed with a gush of extreme sorrow.) After a minute or two, she glanced up and proceeded with quivering lip: "He came upon the veranda and kissed mamma and I." (Pause again.) "He then went directly to his library. Mabel and Howard ran around the house to the back yard, where they had been playing before the carriage came in sight; while mamma followed papa into the library. I remained on the veranda a short time, and then went out to one of the flower beds. Plucking off a flower I soon returned, and entered the reception room, when I began reading from an evening paper, which papa had tossed in, as was his custom.

Said Mr. Grant: "Miss Worthington, can you tell about what time it was when your father came home last evening?" She replied: "Well, as to that I

could not say positively, but he almost invariably arrived at about 7 o'clock, but last evening he came home earlier, as I remember mamma remarked that he had come earlier than usual." "Very well for that;" exclaimed Mr. Hinckle. "Now what next, Miss Worthington?" At this juncture and before Eva could proceed further, there came a gentle call of "Eva! Eva!" issuing from the reception room. She rose, saying, "Excuse me, please, I will see what is wanting." "Certainly," responded both men in unison. She was gone but a few minutes, when she returned stating that the cause of her summons was of trivial importance. It was difficult for her to speak, as she wavered, and her voice was choked with suppressed emotion. Regaining her former composure, Miss Worthington resumed by saying: "It was while I was reading the paper that I heard a ring at the door-bell. I answered the call. On passing to the open door I found a gentleman in waiting. The same gentleman had called to see papa a few evenings before, presenting a card bearing the signature of Roland, yes, John Roland, so knowing that he was not a stranger to papa, I directed him to the library door, which at that time was closed. I gave a knock at the door, and then passed back into the reception room.



"Immediately after the stranger entered the library, mamma, who had been conversing with papa, stepped out into the hall and walked towards the dining room, after which I thought she ascended the stairs to the study, as I heard footsteps on the stairway. The gentleman remained in the library with papa a short time, and when he came out I could hear papa and him talking, but do not remember a word that was said, except, now let me think—except when the man took his departure, I think I overheard the farewell parting of,—‘Well, good by, Mr. Worthington,’ to which papa responded with, ‘Good evening, Mr. Roland.’” “And as to this man’s appearance?” asked Mr. Hinckle, while Mr. Grant kept busy all the time jotting the facts, said by Miss Worthington to the inquiries put by Mr. Hinckle. “Well, I remember he was quite large, fleshy, I mean. He wore a mustache and was rather dark complexioned, his hair being sprinkled with gray.” “Miss Worthington, you say when he called before, he handed you a card upon which was written the name of John Roland; now, was that all that was written upon the card?” “Yes, sir; it was just a plain card bearing the name, but with no address.” Mr. Hinckle now asked: “Miss Worthington, we wish to know whether or not you have formed a theory as to

who committed the crime?" At this, her eyes again filled with tears, and she remained silent. When Mr. Hinckle asked Miss Worthington the above question, she was standing near the front door. Being thus interrogated, she turned and looked steadfastly out of the large glass window of the door. Tears began to bathe her cheeks, but in a short time, and after partially recovering she said: "Mr. Hinckley, there is one thing that pains me very much." Here another pause, while her breast heaved with inward emotion. Mr. Hinckle now kindly said: "Miss Eva, it now becomes my very painful duty to insist upon you divulging the cause of your trouble, if it is in any way connected with this sad occurrence."

Recovering somewhat, and assured by the kindness of Mr. Hinckle, Miss Worthington replied: "Well, then, I must tell you that I admitted upon papa's command another man into the library after Mr. Roland had taken his departure. As I told you, after Mr. Roland had entered the library, I resumed my reading in the reception room. I was still there when Mr. Roland passed out, and it was while seated there, that I heard the friendly words of departure. This was some time after mamma had passed up stairs, as I had supposed, and which supposition afterwards



proved to be correct. I remained in the reception room, engaged in reading, until I heard another call at the door-bell. I arose and immediately answered the summons. On passing to the door, I saw at once the gentleman was a stranger. He bowed very courteously, and asked if my papa was at home. To this inquiry I responded in the affirmative. He then said he wished to see papa upon some legal matter. Without asking his name I told him to wait a moment. I then passed to the library door, and announced to papa that a gentleman was waiting in front and wished to see him upon some legal matter. After making known to papa the stranger's desire, he, without hesitation told me to direct him in, which I did, walking some distance in front of the stranger, and pushing open the library door, which had swung back until it was slightly ajar. The stranger passed in, closing the door. After this I hastily stepped back in the reception room and finished reading an article, upon which I had become quite interested, before the last interruption occurred." The brave girl, who now clasped her hands together, with her demure eyes glancing alternately at the floor and ceiling, turned and paced slowly down the hall; but on reaching the door of the library she once more pressed a handkerchief to her eyes. She

passed the door, and on reaching the other end, she leaned her head upon the door of the dining room for a minute or two, when she turned and retraced her footsteps; stopping at the library door, where she knelt down and leaning her head upon the door, and again burying her face in the handkerchief, she sobbed bitterly.

It was while she was kneeling there, that Mr. Hinckle advanced, and said in a kind, winning and gentle voice: "Miss Eva, in this hour of calamity, we know it is very agonizing to you, indeed, but justice must be meted out to the guilty;" and he further importuned her to try to be calm and composed. Being thus so kindly addressed by Mr. Hinckle, Miss Worthington, after a little while, arose and continued: "After connecting the alarm wire, as we call it, with the wire leading into the kitchen, which connection is made by the two being simply hooked together, so that it would summon the servant girl in case of another ring, I passed on into the parlor, and began looking over some new music which I intended trying on the piano. While seated there, and before I had played, mamma stepped lightly through the reception room and into the parlor. As she approached, I could readily see that something was troubling her seriously,

for her countenance foretold grave and suspicious evidence of possessing vague and shadowy fears." This severe ordeal at the time and place was trying in the extreme, but this beautiful young lady, now summoning all her powers of self-control into one final utterance, her mind wandering in visions of painful regret, said: "It was then, gentlemen, that I made the vital, vital mistake, that I fear, cost my dear papa his life. Here she was deeply affected, and relapsed into a deep state of remorse, and wept like a child that she was. The two men cast significant glances at each other. Mr. Hinckle then smiled, as he drew up his chair nearer to Mr. Grant and whispered: "I think the next statement Miss Worthington makes, will reveal some real and tangible clue to the criminal, if criminal it be, who killed the attorney."

It is well to state that Mr. Hinckle was ordered by Chief Meryle to trace every line pointing to contrary evidence of suicide, also to note carefully any corroborating evidence that it was; so Mr. Hinckle now remarked: "Miss Eva, it pains us to solicit of you any further information in this matter, as you have indeed already been very grateful and condescending; but we do feel it our urgent duty for your sake and the family's, and in the name of justice, and a clamoring

populace, to trace down the criminal who committed this dreadful deed."

To this Eva replied: "Mamma remarked upon entering the parlor, that she entertained grave fears concerning the last one whom I admitted. This, of course, elicited some surprise on my part. Mamma further said that she watched him from the front study window, and noticed that he seemed greatly excited when he stepped from the carriage, which had just stopped upon the road in front. After some delay, she saw him approach the house, stopping now and then, making a great many gestures, as if in distress or incensed with anger. She said that her curiosity was somewhat aroused by his strange and singular actions, while proceeding up the walk. She also stated that the stranger passed up the steps leading onto the veranda, after which she listened for the ringing of the door-bell; that some time had elapsed before she heard the bell ring, and in the confusion of his language she heard him say something about papers, that he would produce or,—and I remember she said that he left the sentence unfinished, and gave the door-bell a violent pull. The conversation between mamma and me was then suddenly interrupted by Mabel and Howard, who came storming into the room, telling of

some occurrence; thus, the interview was abruptly terminated by their intrusion, and as mamma rose to depart, I besought her to give herself no fear—but—oh—had—I—.” Here she broke completely down, and sobbed most piteously. Suddenly regaining control of her emotions she said: “This, gentlemen, was the greatest mistake of my life, for the way mamma looked and the earnestness in which she spoke justified immediate investigation, but——,” she paused, and tears of regret glistened in her eyes. Continuing she then said: “This was nothing new for mamma, for she has been accustomed to entertain fears before upon the slightest provocation; and, when incidents akin to this occurrence had taken place, she nearly always came to me for counsel, her fears having always turned out to be of trivial importance, and of little or no consequence; also, perfectly harmless in effect, as far as papa was concerned; but, this time mamma seemed to be more wrought up by the strange acting man insinuating himself into the library than I had ever witnessed her before. She seemed to be conscious of some great danger until I allayed her fears.”

Here she became silent. Mr. Hinckle broke it by saying: “Now, Miss Worthington, is this all you

know concerning the second stranger who visited your father last evening?" "Yes, sir," answered Miss Worthington; then after a moment she added: "I did not see him leave my papa's library." She had here begun to say something more, when Mr. Grant remarked, lest he would forget: "Where were you that you did not see him when he withdrew from the library?" "As I told you before, I had connected the two wires, as usual, when we wished to be relieved. I then stepped into the parlor." "Then you began looking over some music preparatory to trying on the piano, did you not?" "Yes, sir, that was exactly it, Mr. Grant," said the noble and honest girl in tones conveying the deepest conviction. Said Mr. Hinckle: "Well, Miss Worthington, we are arriving slowly but surely at the truth. All these points will very materially aid us in the solution of the mystery. Now, Miss Eva, what occurred next?" Said Eva: "I stepped from the divan to the piano, and began playing. When I ceased I heard loud talking going on in the library. I gave little heed to this, as it was not uncommon to hear papa engaged in heated discussion of this kind." At this juncture, both Mr. Hinckle and the coroner glanced at each other, Mr. Hinckle giving his hand a wave and the coroner answering it with a nod.



This beautiful young daughter of the deceased attorney continued: "I placed another sheet of music before me, and after playing it, I stopped quite a while before trying another. I distinctly remember that I could hear no talking, but all was silent in the library. The silence was noticeable, for inasmuch as there had previously been so much vociferous and explosive talking, there then followed a corresponding stillness." There now followed a pause, after which Mr. Hinckle asked: "What did you do next, Miss Eva?" "I placed another sheet before me, and was looking for one more when I was summoned to supper, having heard the ringing of the bell by the servant girl; it being her custom to step from the dining room out into the hall before ringing. I immediately withdrew from the parlor, passed through the reception room, walked through the hall, and passed into the dining room, where I found mamma and the children; for, Howard, who had remained with me in the parlor when mamma left, had joined her some time before. Oh, gentlemen, this is terrible! And just to think what a day may bring forth! Oh, who has dared to take my dear papa's life? Whose cruel hand has done this? And poor mamma, what will become of her?" Here her grief became unlimited, while tears sprang

to the eyes of Mr. Grant, and the face of Mr. Hinckle marbleized into sympathy.

Mr. Hinckle in his profession had witnessed many scenes of agony and distress; yet, he was exceedingly moved by this. It was about nine o'clock A. M. and by this time there was an anxious surging crowd of humanity beginning to assemble on and about the grounds surrounding the house. It was a crowd containing many and intimate acquaintances of the attorney and his family, some merely neighbors, and some from neighboring villages; while others were from the city. They were all there seeking the truth, having heard of the conflicting reports in the morning papers. Not one could be induced to quit the grounds until satisfied that their great friend and counsellor who had aided them all in one way or another out of difficulty, sometimes at his own expense, and again for a mere pittance, lay a corpse within this magnificent residence. In their anxiety to know the truth they had concentrated their forces into groups, and stood earnestly discussing the matter in solemn and hushed voices, characteristic to such an occasion.

It was, indeed, a sorry and sad looking crowd, and upon their faces could be traced evidence of real sorrow and sympathy. At every ring of the bell (it oc-

curring' quite frequently), the coroner or Mr. Hinckle, who were both stationed near the front door, took the liberty to respond to each call. It was during the recital of facts by Eva that the crowd began to assemble. It was a civil body, however, creating no outward demonstration; but every now and then, some very great and intimate friend of the attorney would without hesitation quietly ascend the veranda steps and obtain the information desired. They were always met by either one of the above named gentlemen, when they would be told the facts in brief. None up to this time had expressed a desire to enter. The all important question to them was, as to whether Attorney Worthington was really dead, caused from being shot in his library, as reported in the papers. Upon being assured that such was indeed the case, they would turn sorrowfully away and join one of the groups in the front yard; or, even upon the public road where some had congregated. The truth was told to each inquirer in a calm, clear and impressive manner, especially so when Mr. Hinckle responded; always taking good care to state that owing to Mrs. Worthington's prostrate condition, no interviews were to be allowed.

As Mr. Hinckle gazed from the large glass in the

door opening upon the veranda, he could readily see those whose very manner and look evidenced revenge, and woe to the person or persons who so cowardly had slain their faithful friend and fellow citizen.


Eva, after her deluge of emotion, had taken a seat upon a large hall lounge a few feet from the door opening into the reception room. Mr. Hinckle and the coroner had stood for some time in the front end of the hall watching the crowd out in front, some shifting their position and joining other groups in their restless desire to learn the facts, and some even standing upon the very spot where Mr. Worthington had alighted upon his arrival the previous evening. It was during a lull of this anxious inquiry at the door that Mr. Hinckle left Mr. Grant in charge in front, while he stepped back and approached Miss Worthington, who had turned and hid her face away from the gaze of any who appeared at the door. She certainly knew of the crowd that had assembled without, but did not choose to view it, owing to the very sorrowful occurrence that had occasioned its presence; and, had for that reason, no doubt taken the seat previously mentioned. She, too, evidently thought that Mr. Hinckle wished to interrogate her further, for she now seemed willing to give him all the in-

formation she could. Mr. Hinckle sat down upon the lounge by Miss Eva, and after speaking a few kind words of encouragement, asked: "Miss Eva, have you anything more that you wish to tell?" On looking up, Eva seemed to be confused and momentarily dazed; her keen power of memory having no doubt been blunted by this awful and heart-breaking bereavement, much less the very severe ordeal through which she was passing. Said Eva: "Let me think, Mr. Hinckle, for I cannot distinctly remember;" and as she sat looking towards the library door, her eyes finally rested upon the door-knob, when they suddenly filled with tears, as she said in a broken, tremulous voice: "Yes, Mr. Hinckle, I remember now." Her voice now became too tremulous to proceed. In a little while Mr. Hinckle said: "Miss Worthington, we indeed feel much indebted to you, for you have opened up a theory which furnishes us sufficient material upon which to work, at least for the present; but, Miss Eva, if you will please be so kind as to tell me what occurred up to the time I met you in the hall last evening, I will conclude my questioning for the present, for you now need rest." This accomplished and highly esteemed lady now rose, and standing before Mr. Hinckle, trembled, as do the leaves on some grand,

noble and majestic tree standing alone in its grandeur and sublimity when a passing, eddying summer gust of wind strikes the branches of this evidence of God's greatness and supreme power. Suddenly the emotional quivering of the foliage of this product of nature's beauty, grandly elegant in its every proportion, suddenly stops. So it was with Eva Worthington. The spasms of emotion had subsided. As she stood there the very embodiment of kindness and sympathy, her every word, glance and motion was significant of truth and fidelity. She had been led in the simple paths of virtue and truth by parents who had both early been taught to reverence God.

This grand and imposing personage stood thus confronting Mr. Hinckle, and in words that carried conviction of truthfulness, said: "Thinking that papa had been detained in his library, and the first summons bringing no response, except from me (for I distinctly heard it even from the parlor), it occasioned no fear or uneasiness on my part; but after the second call, I, for no other reason explainable, except that I wished to hasten matters along, left the dining room where mamma and the children were waiting, and passed into the hall, stopping at my papa's library door where I called to him; but no answer came. I

did not repeat the call again, for I knew, by experience, that he would have answered immediately, no difference how pressing affairs may have been. After this I passed out and onto the front veranda. I again called for papa, but could hear no direct response although I thought I heard voices coming from the direction of the road. I had often seen my papa standing there near the exit leading from the yard, but this evening the street lamp had not been lit, or if it had been it certainly had gone out, or been blown out; so I passed back again and entered the hall. When I came to the center I stopped directly under the gas-jet and in front of my papa's library door:" (suppressed emotion.) Finally continuing, she said: "Oh, when I came;" now a bitter wail burst from her lips, as shrill and clear as a panther's cry in the deep and tangled Selvan of the Amazon, and which could have been heard in every part of that grand old home, where many and many a consultation had taken place, the issues of which had involved and shifted thousands and thousands of dollars, for it, too, had been the home of Mr. Worthington's father, who had indeed been a very noted and learned attorney, also a judge. In fact, it was partially through his father's guidance and rigorous discipline that the son had achieved such pronounced prominency as a lawyer.



The piercing cry of lamentation soon summoned the women who were still in the parlor attending Mrs. Worthington. Next came the servant girl who could not refrain from poking her head in from the dining room door; then, the coachman who had heard the cry from the stable, all the doors leading from the hall to the backyard being open. The coachman had also observed some commotion among those standing in groups upon the drives, and being fired with the spirit of retaliation, as his closing interview with Mr. Hinckle would indicate, came as rapidly as possible to see what the outcry meant and ostentatiously to render any necessary assistance. It was indeed quite difficult for Mr. Grant to keep out the crowd. Even Mrs. Worthington, in the absence of the ladies, had by almost superhuman effort come into the hall, only to find her daughter now calm and composed. She had not fainted, or died of heart failure.

This modern Venus, had in her emotional feelings become absolutely oblivious of her surroundings, when she shrieked out, just as one only becomes conscious of the habit of soliloquizing when approached by some one, or by self-discovery. After this commotion had ceased, the women contrived to induce Mrs. Worthington to return to her couch in the parlor.



This feat was very easily accomplished, for she was very weak and nervous. Eva, too, kindly advised her mamma to return, assuring her that she need give herself no fear concerning her; and, in fact, had started to follow her mamma, when Mr. Hinckle stepped forward and whisperingly said, as he pointed to the carpet in front of the library door: "And Miss Eva, it was there I found you when I came here last evening." To this Eva answered in a cool and impressive tone of voice: "It was, and Mr. Hinckle, it was while standing there that the strange premonition came quickened by what mamma had previously told me, and as you remember I appealed to you to open the door." Mr. Hinckle was very profuse in his thankfulness and kindly told Eva to seek rest and recuperation, and pleasantly bowing himself out of her presence, now joined the coroner who was still gazing from the hall window, but who, of course, had observed every action and overheard every word that had been said.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN INTRUSION.

MR. HINCKLE and the coroner remained in consultation a few moments. Mr. Grant had drawn from his pocket a small note book, and as the conversation proceeded he would at the suggestion of Mr. Hinckle write down the names of those whom he intended calling to the witness stand at the inquest, which would occur after the remains of the renowned lawyer were laid to rest.

They both deemed it very judicious to have a talk with Mrs. Worthington, thinking that something might be gleaned from her that would give color to clews already obtained. At length Mr. Hinckle finally said: "I believe I will step to the parlor, and if possible interview Mrs. Worthington, for it is now high time to act. I am desirous also to know when Mr. Worthington's funeral will take place, and to ascertain whether any arrangements for the sad ceremony have been made." At this, Mr. Hinckle left the presence of Mr. Grant, and passed to the parlor. Mr. Grant

stood sadly looking from the hall glass in the door. He stood there for at least ten minutes.

He had in the interim, during which time Mr. Hinckle had absented himself, noticed a young man to alight from a carriage drawn up in front, the driver of which remained inside. The one who had alighted, immediately passed upon the drive leading up to the veranda steps. He came as one having authority and a perfect right. Mr. Grant saw him stop and hold a momentary consultation, after which he passed hurryingly on. Ascending the veranda steps, he stepped to the door without noticing Mr. Grant through the glass. His face was very pale and wore a haggard expression, but not giving evidence of very long and continued agitation or sorrow, probably such as one night's worry and sleeplessness might cause. He rang the bell, and just as Mr. Grant was in the act of opening the door, Mr. Hinckle passed out of the reception room and entered the hall. As Mr. Grant opened the door, the stranger (for stranger he was to the coroner), said in an earnest but sad tone: "Good morning, gentlemen," and at the same time stepped through the open doorway, and without waiting recognition continued: "Is attorney J. B. Worthington really dead?" The two men simultaneously answered that he was.

Mr. Hinckle now drew near the stranger and said: "You seem to be somewhat acquainted here; are you a relative of the deceased?" The stranger said: "I am no relative of the Worthington family, but have a perfect right to be here, for reasons that concern more than one." Both Mr. Hinckle and the coroner glanced at each other while the stranger continued: "Gentlemen, I should be pleased to be accorded the pleasure and privilege of seeing Mrs. Worthington and her daughter, Miss Eva, if you please." He spoke the last of the above sentence while proceeding towards the reception room.

Mr. Hinckle stepped quickly forward and tapping the stranger on the shoulder said: "My dear sir, your intrusion here is rather abrupt. We do not even know who you are, and as we are officers of the law we must not permit you to take such bold advances without further explanation." The stranger now turned and replied: "Who, sir, are *you*, that you have authority to speak to me in this manner? I will seek a consultation with Miss Worthington." Mr. Hinckle promptly replied: "Sir, I told you who I am." "Well," said the stranger, "you say you are authorized to act, but what proof can you offer concerning this fact?" Mr. Hinckle did not wish to prolong the altercation

lest it might be overheard by Mrs. Worthington or Eva, for the stranger was beginning to be quite vociferous in his declarations. At the last demand of the stranger, Mr. Hinckle merely turned over the left lapel of the coat under which had been pinned a detective badge. The stranger seeing this now remarked: "Oh you are a detective; very well then." Mr. Hinckle, on seeing that the stranger was willing to quietly conform to his wishes, assumed a pleasant air also, and remarked: "I have authority to act, in this affair, and since you seem so deeply interested concerning the attorney, and welfare of the family, it becomes my duty to ask your name, and also to account for your presence here this morning.

The gentleman, for we will denominate him as such at present, now seated himself upon the very lounge upon which Mr. Hinckle had been sitting when he responded to the coroner's call some two hours previous. He was a man well proportioned, with eyes bearing a troubled look and with cheeks now somewhat flushed with red, but one could not tell whether with anger or embarrassment. He sat there some little time with his elbows resting on his knees, quietly circling a silk hat around in his hands. Mr. Grant now slowly passed the gentleman and Mr. Hinckle still stood beside him

with fingers and thumb engaged in twisting his heavy black moustache, his eyes at the same time resting upon the stranger's rich locks of jet black hair, one of which gracefully encircled the right side of his broad, expansive, and noble looking forehead.

The stranger suddenly glanced up and replied to the last question put by Mr. Hinckle. He said: "I am perfectly willing to reveal my identity, and also, to account for my presence upon this very solemn occasion; and will tell you both without the slightest degree of reluctance if you insist upon it."

## CHAPTER IX.

CLAUDE NICHOLAS.

No doubt the reader has already surmised ere this, that the stranger referred to at the close of the previous chapter was none other than the one the attorney had in mind while conversing with his wife, Emily, in the library just before the entrance of the man whom the attorney addressed as Mr. Roland. It will also be remembered that Mr. Roland was the first man to call upon Mr. Worthington after his arrival home.

The stranger, who had now become very calm, there being not a tremor in his voice when he frankly stated what he would willingly do at the close of the preceding chapter, still retained his position on the lounge. To Mr. Hinckle his assertions seemed very frank and emphatic. They also came with pronounced decision, there being nothing held in reserve. Mr. Hinckle insisted by then saying: "I have asked you to reveal your identity, and also to make known your purpose here." To this the stranger responded: "Miss Eva Worthington will identify me;" and after a short pause

he added: "and what other information may be required regarding me either Miss Eva or Mrs. Worthington can amply furnish."

At this Mr. Hinckle said: "Excuse me please, and I will just step to the parlor door, and tell Miss Eva to come." At this juncture the stranger produced a small card, at the same time saying: "One moment please," when he passed it to Mr. Hinckle further adding: "Please hand it to Miss Worthington, and tell her I am awaiting her presence in the hall."

Mr. Hinckle readily acquiesced, and passed rapidly through the reception room and gently knocked at the parlor door. Miss Worthington responded and Mr. Hinckle handed her the card, telling her that the gentleman was waiting in the hall. Miss Worthington's face blanched perceptibly as she glanced at the card, and she shrunk back into a chair, burying her face in her hands, actually suppressing any outcry:—consciously refraining from it lest it would disturb her mamma, as it had done before. The neighbor women had all left, except two who were not in the room at the time. Mrs. Worthington was lying upon the couch, her face being turned from the daughter. Mr. Hinckle gently closed the door and stood anxiously awaiting a reply. The agony and pent up emotion seemed to



be bitterly raging within, tossing and vibrating the feelings of this extremely sensitive and refined young lady, until the very rays of consciousness seemed to be rapidly fading and melting away before the dark clouds of mystery and sorrow. She arose in a very short time, and passed into the reception room followed by Mr. Hinckle. Instead of walking on into the hall, she went to the front window, and stood there with her face buried in her handkerchief. Mr. Hinckle stood near, gracefully dangling his heavy gold watch chain with one hand and again twisting his mustache with the other, blandly gazing downward at the carpet. Mr. Hinckle, while standing there, heard Miss Eva say, as if soliloquizing in low, but plaintive tones: "Oh how could it have been!" Mr. Hinckle retained his position some time, perhaps five minutes, when suddenly Miss Worthington turned, and approaching him said in a very tremulous voice: "Mr. Hinckle, please inform Mr. Nicholas that I cannot see him just at this time."

Mr. Hinckle, without any questioning, quickly nodded his assent and passed out of the room and into the hall without closing the reception room door. He immediately informed Mr. Nicholas what Miss Worthington had told him. This very noble and robust look-

ing gentleman did not seem disturbed at first in the least, but merely gazed about the hall in blank wonder. He then rose and paced to the far end of the hall adjoining the dining room, passing the door leading into the reception room, not failing to glance into that department. On reaching the end of the hall he turned and came back again; and as he again came to the reception room door he paused, and glanced inquiringly within, when upon seeing the door leading into the parlor partially swing open he kindly spoke the one word "Eva," after which he paused for a moment, peering through, as if listening for a reply. He could see no one for Eva had passed into the parlor. He next took one step into the reception room, as if intending to enter. At this time Mr. Hinckle again stepped forward and said: "Miss Worthington has said that she could not see you just at present, and in order to avoid further trouble I beseech you not to be quite so persistent. If you are, I shall have to interfere, in as much as it is my legal duty, as an authorized officer of the law."

Mr. Nicholas did not show any signs of resistance, and when he turned, as Mr. Hinckle gave the command, his face presented signs of calm submission, and perfect obedience; so, without saying more he

passed rapidly through the hall toward the front. He walked out and down the drive to the carriage, and upon entering was driven rapidly westward.

After Mr. Nicholas had departed, the coroner and Mr. Hinckle held a short consultation after which the coroner also left, telling Mr. Hinckle that he would be back in the afternoon, and if any clues were obtained, leading to the apprehension of the guilty, to call him by telephone, there being a "phone" in a neighboring store some two or three hundred yards westward upon the public road from the Worthington home. The inquisitive, prying crowd that had in the early part of the morning almost surrounded the residence was now rapidly dispersing, each having obtained information to their satisfaction, much less, the noon hour was now close at hand.

## CHAPTER X.

### AN ADMISSION.

MR. HINCKLE remained in the hall a short time after the departure of Mr. Grant. As he slowly walked to and fro, he could hear nothing save the ticking of the old brass clock in the dining room, and an occasional moan issuing from the parlor.

The confusion of the morning had entirely ceased, and a sad and weird feeling began to pervade the mind of Mr. Hinckle. Being thus left alone, almost absolute quiet hovered over and about the members of the stricken household. Mr. Hinckle, upon glancing at his watch, found the time to be just fifteen minutes of twelve. The remains of the attorney were being properly looked after by friendly neighbors, and again being somewhat tired out, Mr. Hinckle reclined upon the hall lounge before mentioned. The pressure of the startling and singular incidents of the past sixteen hours preyed fearfully upon the mind of Mr. Hinckle. He could neither rest nor remain in one position very long, for his very action and thought seemed to be

fraught with a burning restlessness, which at once signified his fixed and stolid intentions of not relinquishing or abating in the least his activity in the case until every thread, leading to the perpetrator of the atrocious crime was traced to its very end. It was now high time, indeed, for earnest, vigorous effort, and some one was certainly being wound in and securely fastened by the coils of discovery. Indeed, the circle of fact was fast closing in upon the center where stands the murderer of attorney Worthington; when the circle dwindles down to the last coil the world will know the guilty person.

The affair was, indeed, a striking one to Mr. Hinckle. His opportune arrival, following so closely upon the commission of such a crime; his meeting with the attorney's daughter in the hall, who was then in search of her father, and the discovery of the fatally wounded attorney a few moments after, all presented very strange combinations indeed; but when we stop a moment to consider the official capacity in which the attorney was acting; his fame and influence; his standing and close relationship to the business transaction of officers employed in the service, the coincidence may not seem so strange, for there was almost invariably some one from the force calling upon him nearly every,

evening on some business, relative to the work at which they were engaged.

The timely arrival of Mr. Hinckle upon this particular occasion, indeed seemed to bear out the truth that "murder will out;" for, just as soon as a crime is committed, just so soon does the finger of suspicion point to the guilty. Mr. Hinckle sat with bowed head, his mind deeply engrossed, no doubt, upon the very mysterious circumstances when the servant girl stepped from the dining room into the hall and without ringing the bell, simply announced in low but kindly tones that dinner was ready. Mr. Hinckle said that he would come in a few moments. He thought he would inform Miss Eva, so he stepped to the parlor door and made the announcement. He hoped to gain a few minutes' talk with Eva, and he thought this would furnish an excellent opportunity for doing so. After making the announcement to Eva, she paused a moment before replying, then said that she would be in the dining room in a short time. At this, Mr. Hinckle withdrew and proceeded at once to the dining room. He had no sooner taken his seat at the table when Eva appeared.

Mr. Hinckle said while his soft gray eyes emitted sparks of pity and sympathy: "Come, Miss Eva, sit down here," pointing out a chair at the table near by.

"Thank you," said Eva, as she sat down; after a pause, she added: "Mr. Hinckle, we feel, indeed, much indebted to you for the kindness and gratitude you have shown us." Here she sobbed, while every fiber of emotion and sensation seemed to vibrate her feelings with electrical rapidity. Mr. Hinckle waited a while for this gush of emotion to pass, before venturing to reply. The grief seemed deep and continued. Finally Mr. Hinckle said: "Miss Worthington, I assure you that all I have done in this affair has been entirely warranted and actuated by motives of duty and obligation, owing to my official position. If, through any exertion on my part, we may bring about the apprehension and conviction of the guilty, it shall not I assure you, be extenuated in the least; and now, Miss Eva, there are some matters upon which I wish to speak, and with your kind condescension, I will take the opportunity of doing so now; that is, if it should meet with your pleasure." Miss Worthington's countenance brightened and she said: "Mr. Hinckle, I am only too willing to impart to you any information, that I may know, and which may assist you." "Very well, Miss Worthington. Now, the gentleman who called this morning wishing to see you, and claiming to be Claude Nicholas, who is he, and why does he

seem so deeply interested?" Eva's face colored somewhat as she replied: "I will tell you Mr. Hinckle. Mr. Nicholas has been a frequent caller here for the past year." Eva is again unable to proceed, her emotion being so great. During this time the servant-girl brings on that which generally prefaced the mid-day meal. Resuming Mr. Hinckle asked: "Then do I understand, Miss Worthington, that the object of his coming here has been none other than that of a friend, dropping in probably for a friendly chat, he being an intimate acquaintance of your father?" The last inquiry momentarily dazed Miss Worthington and a flush of red again o'erspread her countenance, but quickly recovering she replied: "Well, yes sir, he may be considered thus." Mr. Hinckle evidently saw the effect of his inquiry, and also understood what her answer implied, for he simply remarked: "Oh, I perceive, Mr. Nicholas comes to call upon Miss Worthington. Now, I understand." Miss Worthington now admitted that what he had last said was substantially true.

Mr. Hinckle did not deem it advisable to question Miss Worthington further at this time upon so delicate a matter, fearing that he might possibly wound her feelings, for deep agitation was beginning to make



itself manifest. The conversation that followed was of a tranquil and consoling nature, on the part of Mr. Hinckle; for, owing to his long and extensive experience in his chosen profession, he had acquired the power by his kindness in speech and manner, of readily soothing and pacifying the heavy heart and the mind of the troubled.

Mrs. Worthington had remained in the parlor, her meals having been taken to her ever since the tragedy had occurred. Eva had eaten very sparingly, and after a few kind words of counsel and advice from Mr. Hinckle, she hastily passed back to the parlor, lest her absence if very long, might distress her mother.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE UNFINISHED LETTER (C).

THE brightness of the morning sun and the extreme intensity of heat, with not even a passing breeze of relief caused all nature to maintain that sullenness of dignity and sublimity of stillness that usually precedes the outburst of a summer storm. Already, dense, black clouds were beginning to appear in the west, reefed near the zenith with a silvery border; and, low mutterings of distant thunder could be distinctly heard in the western distance.

Nothing of an exciting nature had taken place since the disappearance of the surging throng of humanity that had assembled in the morning. All was calm and quiet now in and about the grand old home, except the inward, penetrating and emotional excitement of sorrow for the dead husband and father.

Mr. Hinckle after finishing his dinner and tendering the kind words to Miss Worthington, now stole out to the veranda. He stood there, as if watching the gathering clouds of the rapidly approaching storm,

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but no doubt his thoughts were otherwise located. Vivid streaks of lightening now seemed to rent the dense, heavy clouds, followed by deafening and continued peals of thunder which seemed to shake to its very center the grim old forest that stood some distance to the northwest, and only separated from the grounds surrounding the Worthington home by a very neat and closely woven wire fence; the top of which was decorated here and there at equal distances by beautiful shining knobs, giving the outskirts of the premises a relief and beauty of appearance, that contrasted grandly with this sylvan wilderness on the one side, and the green verdure of the elegant and spacious lawns on the other; graced here and there with beautiful beds of flowers, and unique and fantastic shrubbery.

Mr. Hinckle had walked to the very edge of the veranda, looking to the westward. He stood in a contemplative mood but a few moments when he stepped off and quietly wended his way down the walk, leading to the front entrance gate, and, when once there he stood looking westward down the public highway which ran straight for a distance of probably a mile. Mr. Hinckle was evidently awaiting the arrival of the coroner, or contemplating another

visit to the Chief's office, but the storm was very likely delaying his plans, for he stood there considering the situation. He remained at the front gate until the roaring of the wind in the west end of the great forest could be distinctly heard. He then walked up the drive, passed up the steps, and onto the veranda, where he took a seat upon an old rush bottomed chair that had been on the veranda for years, a venerable old relic, and in which attorney Worthington had often found rest and ease after coming home weary and tired from many a day's legal lattle. Mr. Hinckle now drew the small pocket memoranda from his vest, and began writing. He continued this for some time, when he heard the rattle of a vehicle. On glancing up his eyes encountered two beautiful black horses just making the turn at the front entrance. They came dashing up the drive, stopping in front of the veranda steps. Mr. Hinckle quickly descended the steps and grasped the hand of Mr. Grant who had been sitting in a back seat in the carriage and whose face Mr. Hinckle had recognized by a vivid flash of lightning that lighted up his countenance, and, which took place just as the carriage whirled in at the entrance. Upon reaching the veranda steps, Mr. Grant quickly leaped to the gravel walk and with Mr. Hinckle ascended and

came upon the veranda just as the rain began to fall in torrents.

The faithful old coachman was on hand, and he at once climbed alongside the driver who had brought Mr. Grant, and directed him to drive to the carriage house for shelter; the doors of which were swung wide open. The wind now began to blow furiously. Mr. Hinckle and the coroner entered the hall and passed into the reception room. "Just in the nick o' time," said Mr. Hinckle as they stepped into the hall. "Yes," replied Mr. Grant, "for those clouds looked ominous, and we have driven quite rapidly fearing the storm might overtake us."

Both now took seats, and it was Mr. Grant who first spoke in reference to the proceedings of the case. He said: "Well Mr. Hinckle any new developments since I left this morning?" While busily engaged in tossing and twisting his large gold watch chain with one hand and the other thrown carelessly over the back of an adjacent chair, Mr. Hinckle replied: "Mr. Grant I have certainly picked up some very important clues which, no doubt, may have a direct bearing upon the case." "Well, now indeed," replied Mr. Grant adding he said: "You are, without any undue flattery, the very one who can ascertain all desired

information needed, and now Mr. Hinckle, in what way can this information be utilized at the inquest which will begin to-morrow afternoon after the funeral of Mr. Worthington?"

Said Mr. Hinckle: "It is of utmost importance that one Claude Nicholas be called to the witness stand." Continuing, after a pause, Mr. Hinckle remarked: "His identity with the Worthington family must be closely scrutinized; for, his very mysterious actions here this morning fully justifies this, much less, an interview that I have had with Miss Worthington warrants in my opinion, that such action be taken."

After a pause Mr. Hinckle added: "And furthermore, I think he must be held under very close surveillance, if we do not even place him under arrest."

"And you think him guilty of the crime?" queried the coroner. Replied Mr. Hinckle: "I must say Mr. Grant, things look very dark, indeed, for Mr. Nicholas," and as he drew a paper from his coat pocket he continued, "Do you remember what was written on the paper I found lying upon the writing desk in the attorney's library last evening?" Mr. Grant thought a moment and then ejaculated, at the same time striking Mr. Hinckle on the knee with open hand: "Well Great Cæsar! I had almost forgotten, but now I

distinctly remember, but how do you know that the attorney was referring in that document to Mr. Nicholas?" Mr. Hinckle now related briefly what Miss Worthington had told him at the dinner table, taking good care that not a word should be overheard, for he spoke in tones bordering upon a whisper, and upon concluding Mr. Grant said: "Well, Hinckle, I do believe, man, you have traced the criminal lion to his very lair."

"Ah, come, Mr. Grant, no congratulatory excesses, for it is not so much I gained in the interview with Miss Worthington, as it is in this very paper—that prompts me to suspicion Nicholas." Mr. Grant now took the paper, and carefully perused it in the hope of making the discovery that would connect the name of Claude Nicholas, but all in vain. Finally, Mr. Hinckle remarked, as he carelessly brushed off a raveling that chanced to be on the lapel of his coat, "Do you see any thing that would probably suggest the name of Claude Nicholas, written upon that paper?" "No, I do not," answered Mr. Grant.

Mr. Hinckle now drew his chair closer and pointing to the last stroke of the pen, probably ever made by the attorney, said: "What would you infer from that?" Mr. Grant pondered a while without replying,

then said: "I could not positively say what letter that was intended for;" then peering closer he asked: "Do you think it was intended for the capital letter C, the initial letter of Claude Nicholas?" Mr. Hinckle answered: "That is my candid opinion of the matter, for you see that no other letter in the alphabet is made similar to the regular written, or script letter C." "Well I do declare," interrupted Mr. Grant; "but hold on," said Mr. Hinckle: "After all Mr. Grant, the evidence is as yet, purely circumstantial, however, facts are highly important, also very suggestive, and must be investigated without delay."

Said Coroner Grant: "What information did Miss Worthington impart that would lead to his being apprehended, other than the discovery on this paper which may prove true?"

Mr. Hinckle replied as follows: "I did not interrogate Miss Worthington very extensively, but it is enough for us to know that this very Claude Nicholas is, and has been a *suitor* for the hand of Eva Worthington for at least the past year, and the injunction here given in the *will*, together with this sad occurrence following so closely after the writing of the important paper, found lying on the writing desk in the attorney's library, strikes me as being extremely significant. Does it not seem so to you, Mr. Grant?"



"Yes, it certainly does," said the coroner, and after a brief pause he added: "But I was just thinking whom it was that Miss Worthington mentioned, as directing to her father's library after he came home last evening. There was some one but I cannot recall the name."

"Roland; was that the name?" asked Mr. Hinckle. "Oh, yes, that was it," said Mr. Grant with a snap of his finger—then after a pause he added: "it seems to me that Miss Worthington spoke of another, a stranger, whom she had admitted after Mr. Roland had departed; then the loud talking in the library,"—finishing he said: "this could not have been Mr. Nicholas, for the last person she admitted was a stranger."

Mr. Hinckle seemed to consider this fact very important, for he at once made note of it, thanking the coroner very kindly, saying that he would investigate. He further added that he would bend every energy towards fixing the identity of the individual who entered previous to his discovery of the wounded attorney. There now followed a silence during which time Mr. Hinckle chanced to pick up an album that had, along with some other books, been placed upon a stand, situated some little distance to the left of

the center of the room upon entering. Mr. Hinckle pressed upon the clasp, and it immediately responded with a "click," which opened the album. Mr. Hinckle did this apparently for mere amusement; such, would probably be the opinion of a casual observer. This, no doubt, would also be the decision of a novice in the profession, and indeed it did not in the least degree, arouse the curiosity of Mr. Grant who was quite a novice in his new position, for as Mr. Hinckle raised the album from the stand, Mr. Grant seeing this, now arose and took a few steps to his right and stood gazing and meditating upon some elegant and very elaborate painting, which hung upon the wall. Mr. Grant stood with his back to Mr. Hinckle, who had by this time begun a close scrutiny of the contents of the album.

The first picture to meet his gaze on opening the album was that of attorney Worthington, and looked as if it were of recent date. At the same opening, which was at the very first of the album, and opposite to Mr. Worthington's photograph, Mr. Hinckle readily recognized that of Mrs. Worthington. There being nothing singular about this, he turned to the next where he found the pictures of the two children,—Mabel and Howard. These he recognized at once, for

he had often seen these two children when duty demanded and occasion afforded him a visit to the district attorney's home. Turning to the next page he glanced upon the faces of strangers; but, friends no doubt to the attorney and his family; so, passing rapidly to the next page, he there witnessed the face of Eva Worthington.

Mr. Grant still retained his position, being charmed with the grandeur of the wonderful painting. A small mirror hangs under the painting, and before turning around, Mr. Grant, upon looking in it to adjust his cravat, incidentally sees a movement on the part of Mr. Hinckle which mystifies him at the time. Glancing to the right, and opposite to Miss Worthington's portrait, the keen eye of Mr. Hinckle discovered the next likeness to be that of the person who had called in the morning, and requested to see Miss Worthington.

This personage, the reader recognizes to be Claude Nicholas. Although there was some material difference in the expression of the countenance, nevertheless Mr. Hinckle realized at first sight, that he was gazing upon the portrait of the man who had introduced himself as Claude Nicholas, and who seemed so extremely persistent in his desires. Mr. Hinckle now gave the

edge of the table a few slight raps with a lead pencil, at the same time hissing to Mr. Grant who was still studying the fine delineations of the wonderful work of oriental art and beauty.

Mr. Grant's attention was at once arrested, and on turning he saw Mr. Hinckle beckoning to him with his left hand. Mr. Grant stepped toward the table and Mr. Hinckle pointed first to Miss Worthington's picture, asking him if he could identify it. Mr. Grant replied by saying it was that of Mrs. Worthington. Mr. Hinckle now corrected the mistake which any one of limited experience in studying different individual portraits, might have committed; for, Mrs. Worthington still retained that very remarkable degree of youthfulness in appearance akin to her daughter Eva, also Eva was a striking counterpart of her mother. The acute sagacity of Mr. Hinckle, however, was more fully demonstrated when he moved his right hand from before the opposite picture, before mentioned. Mr. Grant was now asked if he knew the picture.

Mr. Grant took possession of the album and lifted it a little, so as to bring the likeness nearer his vision. He pondered upon it long and earnestly, then slowly shook his head in the negative. Mr. Hinckle told him to look again. He did so, this time studying and as-

sociating all his acquaintances and familiar faces, but could not arrive at any definite conclusion in establishing his identity.

Mr. Grant now turned and seeming a trifle provoked, asked Mr. Hinckle if *he* knew, and what this single photograph, which was so foreign to him that he completely failed to recall the name of the original, had to do in the solution of the mystery at hand.

At this Mr. Hinckle displayed some displeasure, and really indicated that he was a little ruffled by the words of Mr. Grant whose patience seemed to be wearing; and, who did not believe in any undue suspense or conjecture, as evidenced by his last question. Without replying Mr. Hinckle deftly slipped the photograph from its lurking place, and drew from his inside coat pocket a large-sized, well worn old pocket-book into which he placed the picture to the utter astonishment of Mr. Grant. Mr. Hinckle then placed around the pocket-book a rubber which he had removed, and put it back into the same pocket.

Mr. Grant now remarked: "Why, you seem to place some importance in the picture." "Oh, yes, Mr. Grant, there is much to be understood in the business; abilities that are not acquired in a very short time, but which only come after many long years of experience.

This photograph which I have just removed from the album may be brought in as evidence at the inquest, also at the trial of the guilty, which is sure to follow." Mr. Grant now asked whom the likeness represented, to which Mr. Hinckle replied: "I recognize the photograph to be that of *Claude Nicholas*."

This last remark gave rise to a controversy at once.

Mr. Grant expressed a desire to see the picture again. Mr. Hinckle at once responded, by removing it from the pocket-book and passing it to him. After studying it for a little while he saw that it did bear a similarity in expression to the morning visitor known as Claude Nicholas. Remarked Mr. Grant: "The thing that puzzled me, is the way in which the hair is worn, for you see in the picture that it is a genuine pompadour, also the mustache is missing." "Yes," replied Mr. Hinckle, "but those little disguises are easily penetrated by those accustomed to studying different faces," and after a pause he added: "Now, please look at the eye." Mr. Grant did so, and he was at once convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt, that Mr. Hinckle's decision was correct.

Said Mr. Hinckle: "Mr. Grant, you will also observe that this portrait was placed opposite to Miss Worthington's." "Yes, it is quite significant that the

two pictures should be so positioned," replied Mr. Grant. Mr. Hinckle corroborated the last statement made by Mr. Grant, and further said that Miss Worthington may have placed them so.

Mr. Hinckle closely examined the other portraits, but found none of importance bearing upon the case.

The conversation now proceeded at some length, touching matters relative to the coming inquest. A number of witnesses were to be summoned. The coroner now asked before leaving if it was really necessary to search again the room in which the deed was committed, to which Mr. Hinckle replied that he thought not, stating that he was very anxious to have a talk with Mrs. Worthington, whom he hoped had recovered sufficiently from the fearful shock as to allow an interview. The storm had passed, revealing the azure sky near the Western horizon. After an exchange of a few further remarks Mr. Grant departed and was driven to his home, a beautiful suburban residence situated some five or six miles from the celebrated Worthington mansion.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MR. HINCKLE AT THE TELEPHONE.

AFTER Mr. Grant had gone, Mr. Hinckle passed the rest of the afternoon, and a portion of the night in completing his investigations, the result of which will appear as the story proceeds.

About six o'clock on the following morning, Mr. Hinckle issued from the front door leading from the hall, and walked rapidly to the little country store. From this he could call by telephone almost any portion of the city. He chose this time, to telephone to Chief Meryle, who in turn would act, at once, according to the importance of the communication.

Mr. Hinckle entered the store and asked the use of the "phone." The proprietor and owner, a Mr. Kildred, directed him to the office, which was situated in a small room-like apartment in one corner of the store, and very convenient to patrons on entering.

Being thus enclosed, it greatly facilitated a more open communication, which even if it be only one-sided to a listener, inferences might be drawn, as to



the real importance of the communication. Thus, this difficulty was obviated by the "phone" being situated as it was. It also insured secrecy at that end of the line at least, for Mr. Hinckle had observed on entering quite a number of men lounging around on store boxes. Mr. Hinckle soon ascertained that Chief Meryle was present after "ringing up" central office, and getting the "exchange." The communication by telephone was as follows: "Hello! hello!" This said by a clerk in the Chief's office. "Hello! is this Chief Meryle's office?" asked Mr. Hinckle. "Yes sir," answered the clerk.

Mr. Hinckle readily recognized the voice to be that of one of the clerks with whom he was intimately acquainted. The clerk also knew the voice of Mr. Hinckle, who did not attempt any vocal disguise for he added before Mr. Hinckle had time to continue: "And what can I do for you friend Hinckle?"

Mr. Hinckle now gave a low chuckle to himself and answered "Well, now, how did you know me, Brice?"

"By being off your guard, again," came the reply.

"You ought to be on the force, Brice," remarked Mr. Hinckle, then he added: "Is the Chief in, Brice?"

"Yes," came the quick reply of the clerk, a noble,

honest fellow, being the Chief's first assistant. His sterling qualities and unflinching honesty had made him a trusted and honored friend and confidant of nearly every member of the force.

Mr. Hinckle now said: "Brice, please tell him I wish to talk to him personally." "All right 'Billy'" said the clerk, after which he added: "Just a moment, please."

Here, another pause of just three minutes, for Mr. Hinckle had drawn his watch from his vest pocket, and gazing downward at its hands, silently watched the flight of time; as, indicated by that honest old minute hand, that had so often guided him when close calculations in time were required.

Suddenly there came the well known voice of Chief Meryle, "Hello! who is this?" said the chief.

"Hinckle," was the answer.

"Oh yes, well, Hinckle what's wanting?"

Mr. Hinckle now said in a very low tone of voice which was scarcely audible to the Chief: "I desire very much that you detail 'Hammer' upon the case, as my assistant. Send him at once, down to No. 4545 E. Kumpton St——"

"Wait, hold on! let me have that number again," interrupted the Chief. Here Mr. Hinckle repeated,

when the Chief jotted it down, after which he said: "Well, now Hinckle, proceed."

Mr. Hinckle said: "I want him sent there for the purpose of holding one Claude Nicholas under close surveillance. He is a suspect in our case, and it may be that he will make an effort to escape."

The above conversation was carried on by means of well known terms, which the Chief fully understood, for they had arranged upon a code of signals in case of this kind, and when absolute secrecy became imperative. The significance of these signals, or verbal expressions, was known only to these two men now in conversation.

The Mr. Hammer referred to, was another detective who had obtained almost, if not quite, as much notoriety in his work, as had Mr. Hinckle himself, having in fact been engaged in the business as long, if not longer than Mr. Hinckle. It may also be well to state here, that these two men had often concentrated their combined abilities in the unraveling of criminal plots, and had succeeded so admirably well in every instance that they had gained at and about the Chief's office, the sobriquet of "Old Invincible;" indeed, they were usually hailed as such, by their fellow comrades. In addition to this they were fast friends, each per-

fectly willing to do the bidding of the other when detailed as an assistant.

The chief responded that Mr. Hammer would be in the office in a few minutes, when he would then detail him upon the case.

"All right," answered Mr. Hinckle and he was about to "ring off" when the Chief said: "Hinckle when will you be in?"

"I will very probably be in some time late this evening; if not, then early to-morrow morning. If any thing of grave importance turns up in the meantime, I will let you know."

"Very well," said the Chief.

"Good-bye," said Mr. Hinckle.

Mr. Hinckle knew full well that he could trust Mr. Hammer, but he apparently entertained grave fears, lest his man, Claude Nicholas, had already become a fugitive from justice ere this; yet, he thought there might be a possibility that he had not; hence the supreme importance in getting word to Mr. Hammer; for he well knew, that if Claude Nicholas had not made good his escape before the arrival of Mr. Hammer upon the scene, it would be impossible for him to do so after his arrival, and under the searching eye of his esteemed and highly respected associate.

Just as Mr. Hinckle was issuing from the little telephone apartment there came a ring and thinking it might possibly be for him, following so closely, and thinking Chief Meryle had reasons to again address him, he ventured to answer the call. He was correct. It was from the Chief, who said that Mr. Hammer had just stepped in, and asked Mr. Hinckle if he wished to converse with him. Mr. Hinckle answered in the affirmative, and the Chief called Mr. Hammer to the "phone." It will be fair to also inform the reader, that these two gentlemen who had gained for themselves such a reputation for recognized ability in their profession, had also formulated a system of expressions by which they could use by telephone, without jeopardizing the publicity to but very little extent. These two men then could converse in language presumably foreign to the nature of affairs. Mr. Hinckle held quite an extended conversation with his friend, conveying to him all the facts, together with the minutest details pertaining to Claude Nicholas, at the same time zealously guarding his signals. This done, he hastily withdrew from the little country store and wended his way back to the scene of the tragedy.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MR. HAMMER.

It will be recalled that Mr. Hammer had received definite instructions from Mr. Hinckle in regard to Claude Nicholas. His stature, carriage, facial appearance, walk, color of hair, eyes, and in fact all that was necessary for him to recognize at sight, whether disguised or not for the experienced eyes, as those which Mr. Hinckle possessed.

After receiving word from Mr. Hinckle he made preparation, as rapidly as possible, to repair to the scene of action; thus, obeying the order given over the telephone by Mr. Hinckle from the little country store. With this end in view, Mr. Hammer boarded a street car, which luckily passed within one square of house No. 4545 E. Kumpton St. After alighting from the car, Mr. Hammer walked one square up Chase street, and upon reaching the south-east corner of Chase and Kumpton streets, he stopped and saw from where he stood, looking diagonally across the street, and one door from the north west corner, upon a very sub-

stantial looking residence, the No. 4545, printed in brazen, glittering figures, over which was placed a very neat sign upon which was written the following notice:—

Board and Lodging.

Inquire Within.

It did not take him long to observe that upon the south west corner, there was situated a very large drug store, the front of which extended a considerable distance along Kumpton street which placed the far end of it directly opposite to house No. 4545.

Mr. Hammer passed across the street and entered the drug store. He called for a bicarbonate of soda, with which to settle his stomach, at the same time assuming a countenance in perfect accord with his pretended ailment. While a young, slim, and pale looking waiter boy hastily responded to the order, Mr. Hammer quietly seated himself upon one of the round seats usually found in drug stores. He leaned his head upon his left hand, his elbow resting upon the counter, and gazed across the street to house No. 4545. His position afforded him a good view of the house. It was a four story brick structure, having but one front door, situated on the right, and a window to

the left on the first floor, each story above having two front windows.

Mr. Hammer drained the contents of the glass, after which he resumed his former position. He sat there at least ten or fifteen minutes; then he seemed apparently to be in great distress, but this was gross pretension on his part, for he never felt better, and he knew the drink was perfectly harmless in effect. Some time after the lapse of the time indicated above, he stated to the boy that he felt a great deal better, and then picked up a daily paper that happened to be lying on the counter and within easy reach.

To a person not accustomed to the actions and manner of these men, it would seem that he was perfectly frank, and to all appearances his attention seemed to be wholly absorbed in scanning the passing event as described and detailed in one of the leading daily papers. His interest in the newspaper seemed not to flag for at least half an hour, turning each page at regular intervals, as if devouring its entire contents. He at last cast it aside, and began humming an old tune; then suddenly turning, he said to the boy: "Well, lad, your soda has certainly done the right thing, and now I believe I will take a cigar." From the show-case the boy withdrew a box of choice



"Havanas" which he placed upon the counter. Mr. Hammer promptly helped himself to one, and after lighting it calmly took his old position, this time supporting his left leg with his hands, they being clasped about the knee, with fingers alternating. Thus, his presence in the drug store was fully licensed for another quarter of an hour, making his stop there nearly an hour without betraying the least shadow of suspicion, concerning his official position, or the object of his coming into that vicinity.

After the entrance of Mr. Hammer into the drug store, there had been a number of people entering, who, after making purchases immediately passed out. Finally just as Mr. Hammer had decided to seek a new lodging place, and also to ask for a few meals, if necessary, he saw the front door of house No. 4545 open, and a man of splendid proportion step forth. He carried a satchel in his left hand, and proceeded down the walk to the street. Mr. Hammer turned his face slightly, lest he should be seen through the window. This last act on the part of Mr. Hammer was but momentary, however, and on turning and gazing from the window he saw the stranger, who answered minutely the description given of Claude Nicholas, rapidly walking westward on Kumpton street. After per-

mitting the stranger to gain a safe distance, Mr. Hammer left the drug store very calmly and unconcerned. He then proceeded westward on Kumpton street.

Mr. Hammer managed to keep some distance behind, but not more than a square. The stranger had not proceeded more than four squares when Mr. Hammer saw him enter the building, the second and third stories of which were occupied by offices, as indicated by the names of various firms being printed upon the front windows.

Mr. Hammer now passed to the opposite side of the street, and began to scan the names of the different offices. It was not long before he saw the name, "C. H. Nicholas, Attorney at Law," a second story apartment and situated just over the entrance door. This name was printed upon a large window, containing only two panes of glass, the name being upon the upper glass and the professional part upon the lower. Mr. Hammer passed on until he came directly opposite the building. He then gave a searching look at the particular window, bearing the name. He could distinctly see a man inside, who seemed to be engaged in hastily picking up papers from some sort of table or desk, as he supposed. He would then place them into a small box which he held in one hand, and such as are

used by attorneys. He held the box for some time, fumbling among its contents, after which he suddenly brings forth a rectangular looking paper, probably an envelope. He next draws forth another paper from the one held in his hand; thus strengthening the possibility of the first being an envelope. He then stands looking at it for a short time, as if reading the contents; then he places it back into the first paper, supposed by Mr. Hammer to be an envelope. The stranger then places it into his inside coat pocket, after which he sits down upon a chair in front of the desk, and very near the window. Mr. Hammer can distinctly see these movements. He next, suddenly turns upon his chair, his back being to the window, and leans his head upon his right hand, the elbow resting upon the arm of the chair. After two or three minutes have elapsed he whirls around; pushes back the lid of the desk, and opens a little drawer situated on one side of the desk. Out of this he draws forth a square piece of paper. He then reaches for some article elevated upon the desk, after which he swings his right arm to the right, as if dipping his pen into an ink bottle. Then he assumes the attitude of writing, his body and face being turned a little to the right. So distinct is Mr. Hammer's view, that he can even detect some move-

ment, as if passing his arm from right to left, on beginning a new line. He then ceases writing, and his arm once more reaches forward, as if placing the pen back, probably into a wire holder or some sort of receptacle, for the movement is made so rapidly. Next comes a movement of both hands, as if in the act of folding the letter just written. He now places what he has written into what Mr. Hammer concludes to be an envelope, after which he raises it to his lips, in order to moisten, preparatory to sealing. Now he reaches for the pen, then comes a movement, as if addressing the letter. This done, he replaces the pen, if pen it be, to its former position. Now, he reaches for something lying in front of him, but located some distance away; probably near the back part of the desk. After this he passes his hand rapidly over something lying before him. This Mr. Hammer concludes to be a blotter, being pressed upon the addressed envelope. He sits for a few moments, gazing intently at what Mr. Hammer thinks to be a letter, written, sealed, and ready for mailing. Suddenly he draws a handkerchief from his outside upper coat pocket, and wipes either perspiration from off his face or tears from his eyes. He retains this attitude a few moments longer, then again raises the handkerchief to his face, after which

he rises and draws something from his pocket. The article, whatever it may be, is seen to gleam and glitter, as the bright rays of the morning sun, just at that time illuminates the office and settles beyond question, the identity of the person whom Mr. Hammer saw enter the building some fifteen or twenty minutes previous. The sun shines out clear and bright, but only for a moment when it is hidden by another cloud. He now stands fumbling in front of the desk with the object taken from his pocket. Mr. Hammer concludes that it may be a bunch of keys, or there might be a possibility of its being a pistol, however, the former conclusion predominates in the mind of Mr. Hammer, as he now stands as if locking his desk for his form is somewhat inclined forward, but only for a very short time.

This last movement only corroborates the correctness of Mr. Hammer's conclusion that he is really locking up, preparatory to taking his departure; and, the shining article is simply a bunch of keys. The stranger retreats toward the rear, and passes entirely out of view. Mr. Hammer then moves to the next corner, and stands watching the entrance door. Sure enough, it is as he expected, for after an elapse of not more than two minutes, the stranger appears in the

door-way. He carries the same satchel as before. After standing in the door-way a very short time, he walks directly across the street to the post-office located in the Government building, a large, noble, and massive structure.

Just as he passes up the steps of the Government building, leading into the post-office department, he reaches into the pocket into which he was seen to deposit what seemed to be a letter. It proves to be correct, for Mr. Hammer is now near enough to observe that the envelope had been addressed, as he surmised, by the actions in the office a few minutes previous. The stranger now passes in, and out of the view of the authorized sentinel of justice.

Mr. Hammer was standing on the corner, a rod or more away, and as the stranger came across the street the detective passed from the sidewalk as if intending to board a car. Instead, he quickly followed the stranger, stepping in at the post-office department in time to see him purchase a stamp.

Placing it on the letter, he passed to the letter window, where he tossed it in. He then turned and walked rapidly in the opposite direction, soon passing from the building.

Mr. Hammer did not immediately follow, but passed

hastily to the window where he had seen the stranger mail the letter. He saw the letter still lying on the counter, and to his great astonishment and shocking surprise, he read the following name and address written upon the envelope :

Miss Eva Worthington,  
Grandin,  
Ohio.

Mr. Hammer then passed quickly to the door through which the stranger had taken his departure from the building.

Once on the steps he cast quick glances in both directions along Main street; but could see no one answering the description of the stranger. Mr. Hammer walked to the corner of Fifth Av'e, and Main street, and there did the same; all traces of him had vanished in the surging throng of restless humanity.

Mr. Hammer had balanced the scales of decision when he saw the stranger mail the letter, and quickly determined that the knowledge to whom it was written, and its final recovery was the weightier side just at that time; even, at the cost of the escape of its author. Its recovery, however, could not be legally done until after it had reached Miss Worthington's

hand, when he well knew that by a little strategy, this could easily be accomplished.

Thus, the chase after the man whom Mr. Hammer knew full well to be none other than Claude Nicholas had ended for the time being, but it would only be a short time, thought he, before they would be conversant with the contents of the letter which he deemed of such vital importance.

Mr. Hammer went forthwith to the Worthington home, and informed Mr. Hinckle of his investigations. Mr. Hinckle then went to the little country store in which was situated the post-office at Grandin. He asked for the Worthington mail. Without hesitancy Mr. Kildred passed him a dozen or more letters. When he came back Mr. Hammer who was seated in the hall pointed out the one he had seen in the Government building. The next morning the contents of all the letters were known to these two gentlemen. They were resting at ease, for they were certain they could produce Claude Nicholas at pleasure.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE INQUEST.

#### DENNIS ON THE STAND.

IN the afternoon of the succeeding day, and after the funeral of the attorney, the inquest began. The air was stifling, and there were assembled in the reception room, the coroner and jury; also, those who were most likely to be called upon to give testimony. A crowd had pushed its way into the hall, despite the urgent orders not to enter, but it was an anxious, inquiring crowd; one, not to be balked by simple verbal orders, issued from men in citizen's clothes; for these demands and appeals came from kind neighbors who had volunteered their assistance. Mr. Hinckle's presence was demanded in the reception room where the inquest was to be held.

At last the hall was closely crowded, each anxious to catch every word at the inquest. There was, also, a great number outside, who had put in an appearance rather late and who had not left them, the shadow

of a chance of gaining admittance. The windows had been raised, owing to the heat which was, at least, intensely extreme, without, but perfectly intolerable within, without ventilation. Under these most unpleasant circumstances the coroner drew forth his watch, and after giving it a hurried glance asked: "Is Mr. Hubert present?"

This stalwart man to whom the reader has been introduced (for he was the attorney's coachman), now rose and said:

"I am here."

"Mr. Hubert, please take the witness chair."

Mr. Hubert responded with alacrity to the demand after which the coroner said:

"Your name, please in full."

"Dennis Hubert," said the coachman.

"Now, Mr. Hubert, you may tell us how long you have been in the employ of Mr. Worthington."

"Let me think,—it will be ten years tomorrow, since the gracious and tender hearted good man, who now lies dead in his casket hired me, and I have been here ever since."

"Now Mr. Hubert, do you know how Mr. Worthington came to meet his horrible fate?"

The eyes of the coachman now shot one glance

around the room, and seemed to beam like sparks emitted from livid steel, while the blood was seen fast mounting to his cheeks. The face that but a moment ago, and when he took the witness chair wore a countenance pale and haggard, now assumed its appearance as when talking to Mr. Hinckle in the stable yard. He said with right hand lifted and finger pointing Heavenward: "As God is my judge, I swear gentlemen that I know nothing about this terrible tragedy, but by the great Heaven I intend to find out who—"

"Never mind what you intend to find out," interposed Mr. Grant. "Mr. Hubert, you have always been Mr. Worthington's regularly employed coachman, have you not?"

"Yes sir, as I told you it will be ten years tomorrow since I first stepped foot on these grounds, and——"

"Mr. Hubert, you have told us that fact once before, now we wish you to answer the questions only."

At this, the coachman looked somewhat dismayed for he was brim full of talk, and did not seem to be aware or conscious of the fact that he would be stopped at once, if he attempted to draw inferences or conclusions of his own unsolicited, however, he soon regained his former dignity of manner, for he evidently possessed a remarkable degree of individu-

ality. He calmly surveyed the jury, anxiously awaiting the next question, while Mr. Grant had turned his head, and was engaged in a whispered conversation with a "stranger" who sat at his right, and a little behind him.

"Mr. Hubert, you met Mr. Worthington at the usual meeting place last evening did you not?"

"Yes sir."

"Where was the accustomed place of meeting Mr. Worthington on his way from the city?"

"At the Lawrence station," said the coachman.

"Now, Mr. Hubert, about what time did Mr. Worthington arrive at Lawrence last Saturday evening?"

"He came out on the 6-15 train."

"Do we understand by that Mr. Hubert that the train was due at Lawrence 6-15 in the evening?"

"Yes sir."

"Was it on time last Saturday evening?" asked Mr. Grant.

"Well, now, as to that I could not positively say, for I did not take notice, but I suppose it was."

"Is the 6-15 the usual train upon which Mr. Worthington came from the city?"

"No sir, he usually came out on a later one."

"How much later," asked Mr. Grant.

"Half an hour, or the one just after the 6-15. They are just half an hour apart."

"Mr. Hubert, did you notice any difference in the manner of Mr. Worthington, or what I mean to say, did he upon alighting from the train greet you, as usual last Saturday evening?"

"Yes sir," and then forgetting himself added; "but I had noticed he had not been so talkative and cheerful as usual for two or three days previous."

"You say he had not been so talkative or cheerful. Now, Mr. Hubert, tell us what opportunity you have had for observing this?"

The coachman looked somewhat dazed, but finally, comprehending the question answered: "Why, it was during our trips to and from the train, to be sure, what other opportunity would I have?"

The witness seemed to be a little out of humor, at such a question.

"Then, Mr. Hubert, do you mean by that statement, that you never conversed with your employer at his own home?"

"Oh, yes, he would frequently come out to the stable to give further orders, or would sometimes send for me to come around to the front, or to the kitchen door."

"Mr. Hubert, further than the conversation in passing to and from the train, you have held no conversation other than pertaining to your duties under orders from the attorney?"

"No sir."

"And these orders were given, as you previously stated?"

"Yes sir."

"Mr. Hubert, have you seen or heard anything that may serve to arouse your suspicions in this sad occurrence?"

"Nothing, further than what I have said in regard to his being not quite so talkative."

"Then you saw nothing previous to the attorney being shot, that might serve to awaken a suspicion?"

Dennis now bowed his head and lowered his large sandy colored eye-brows. After a short pause, he slowly shook his head, and frowningly said: "I can think of nothing. I only wish I could."

"Mr. Hubert, you are a married man we are told."

"Yes sir."

"And further, we understand that you and your family occupy a small cottage situated some short distance to the right of the stable."

"Yes sir, that is true."

"This was built expressly for your benefit was it not?"

"Yes sir, the kind attorney had it built for us soon after my marriage."

"And your family consists of how many?"

"Two children, my wife and self."

"Mr. Hubert, where were you when you first heard what had happened to Mr. Worthington?"

"In the stable, sir."

"How did you receive the information?"

"The servant-girl ran out and told me that something dreadful had happened to Mr. Worthington."

"And that was your first intimation that all was not right."

"No sir."

His answer, naturally enough called forth some degree of surprise. Said Mr. Grant: "What then?"

"I had heard what I thought, a scream, a few moments before the girl came out."

"When you heard what you thought was a scream, why did you not hasten at once to the house?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I simply stopped for a moment to listen, and then thinking of the two children of the attorney, passed on with the fork-full of hay which I was carrying at the time."

The coroner now turned his tactics somewhat. He asked:

"Mr. Hubert, when did you last see Mr. Worthington alive?"

Said Mr. Hubert:

"I passed into the library, after coming from the doctor's office, and was there when the doctor arrived. The doctor said he was still living. That was the last time I ever saw," here the witness is overcome with emotion, but recovering quickly he finished the sentence by saying: "my friend alive."

"Then Mr. Hubert, do we understand that you did not see the attorney from the time of your arrival home last Saturday evening, until you passed into his library as previously stated?"

"I did not," firmly answered the coachman.

"Now Mr. Hubert, one more question: Have you ever had any trouble with Mr. Worthington, or his family?"

"No Sir," This was said with sturdy emphasis, as the witness gazed coolly at coroner and jury.

"Very well, Mr. Hubert, that will do."

At this, Mr. Hubert quickly left the stand, and the next witness was called.



## CHAPTER XV.

### MISS SHALER.

MR. HINCKLE, who had been sitting near the north-east corner of the room during the preceding testimony, now shifted his position to a seat that had been vacated in the opposite corner. He now sat facing the coroner and front window. He also had a commanding side view of the next witness. After some little commotion following the conclusion of the testimony, rendered by Mr. Hubert, the next witness was called. Mr. Grant drew a small book from his pocket, and after rapidly turning to a page where he evidently had written down some names, he said: "Is Miss Shaler present?"

There came a low, plaintive answer of "Yes sir," issuing from an opposite corner of the same side of the room where Mr. Hinckle was sitting.

"Miss Shaler, you may please pass to the witness chair."

With elastic step, but troubled look she came forward, with eyes downcast and countenance pale as

marble. She held a rumpled handkerchief in her right hand. Being asked her name, she replied: "Elizabeth Shaler." "Miss Shaler, you have been working for the Worthington family about how long?"

"Nearly nine years."

"Have you acted as servant girl during all these nine years?"

"Yes sir."

"Where was your home previous to coming here?"

"In Ireland," responded the witness.

"And did you come from Ireland directly to this place?"

"No sir."

"Where then did you go after leaving your native home in Ireland?"

"To the home of my sister."

"And where then was the home of your sister?"

"In Cincinnati."

"Now, Miss Shaler, tell how you chanced to secure your present position?"

"It was through the aid of my sister."

"How was that?"

"A neighbor, who lived opposite my sister's house told her that Mr. Worthington wanted to employ a domestic to work in the kitchen, and so informed my

sister. I was at her home at the time, and being poor and in need of work, I went, at once, to Mr. Worthington's office when he employed me."

The testimony of the witness, although decidedly Irish in expression, demonstrating conclusively her descent, and having only a tendency to strengthen her previous statements, had begun to lose its former timidity of speech; but now, came out full and distinctly, being not at all evasive or wavering in her replies. This, at once, gave evidence that she was quite intelligent, and her manner, also showed a degree of refinement; so much, indeed, for one in her humble position that a sensation of surprise began to pervade the minds of all present.

She now lifted those kind gray eyes and gave a casual glance at the jury for the first time. The attention of all became riveted upon this imposing witness, whose lips might reveal evidence that would quickly loosen the chain of villainy.

"Miss Shaler, did you see Mr. Worthington last Saturday evening after his arrival home, and before being found shot in his library?"

She did not at once reply to this inquiry, but sat, as if endeavoring to recall her memory, or what was more probable, weighing the effect of her answer to the last question. Still she did not answer.

"Miss Shaler, it is necessary that I insist upon you answering, so, I repeat: "Did you see Mr. Worthington last Saturday evening after his arrival home, and before being found shot in his library?"

"Yes sir," the witness replied immediately.

"Miss Shaler, where did you see him?"

A shadow of fear, now crept over her pale cheek, no doubt influenced by her last admission, but however, it was soon dispelled as she firmly answered:—

"In the library."

Here Mr. Grant stopped, and rapidly jotted something down on a piece of paper that was lying on the table in front of him. This was done at the instance of the "stranger," who still retained his seat behind the coroner. Mr. Grant then asked: "Miss Shaler, you say you saw attorney Worthington in his library?"

"Yes sir."

About what time was it that you saw him there?"

"I do not know exactly."

"But Miss Shaler, you can certainly state the time as nearly as you may be able to remember?"

She now rolled her majestic eyes around, glancing upward at the ceiling, and then suddenly gazing downward, as she slowly said in a disconnected manner, her eyes at the same time rapidly filling with tears while

she clutched at the handkerchief more firmly: "It was while—Miss Eva—was playing—on the piano in the parlor—some little time—after Mr. Worthington had come home."

Said Mr. Grant: "Miss Shaler, do you think it could have been an hour after Mr. Worthington had arrived home?"

She sat in a deep study for a short time and then said: "No sir, I do not think it was so long."

"How long then do you think?"

"I do not think it could have been over half an hour."

"Very well then. Now Miss Shaler, when did Mr. Worthington arrive home last evening?"

The witness was now more composed and said: "I remember that it was somewhat earlier than usual, but as to the exact time, I really do not know."

"But please state what time you think it was?"

"I think it was about half past six."

"Then you saw Mr. Worthington in his library about half an hour after this?"

"Yes sir," answered the witness calmly.

"Then you must have seen Mr. Worthington in his library at or about seven o'clock of the evening in question?"

"Yes sir, I think it must have been at or near that time."

"Very well, now Miss Shaler, what occasion had you to visit the library?"

"I was looking for Mrs. Worthington, sir."

"And did you think that Mrs. Worthington was in the library?"

"Yes sir."

"And did you find her there?"

"No sir."

"Miss Shaler, did you pass from the kitchen directly to the library?"

"Yes sir."

"When you reached the door of the library did you find it open?"

"Yes sir."

"Then Miss Shaler, from your answer to the last question, do we understand that you found the door leading into the library standing wide open?"

"No sir, it was not wide open, only a little."

"And did you knock before entering?"

"No sir."

"What then did you do?"

"I pushed it open a little farther, and looked in."

"What then?"

"Not seeing Mrs. Worthington I turned and walked back through the hall passing through the dining room, and then to the kitchen."

"And did you look further for Mrs. Worthington?"

"No sir."

"Miss Shaler, what was your purpose in wishing to see Mrs. Worthington?"

"I wanted to see her in regard to supper."

"And what about it?"

"I was desirous of knowing whether she wished it prepared earlier than usual, Mr. Worthington having returned a little sooner."

"Miss Shaler, was it customary to prepare the evening meal earlier upon such occasions?"

"Yes sir, most usually, but not always."

"Then that, no doubt, depended very much upon the orders given out by Mrs. Worthington, did it not?"

"Yes sir."

"After passing into the kitchen, what did you then do?"

"I began at once, to prepare supper."

"You did that of your own accord?"

"Yes sir, thinking Mrs. Worthington would appear in a short time at least."

"And did she come as you expected?"

"Yes sir."

"About how long after you began actual preparations for the meal, was it that Mrs. Worthington came in?"

The girl again sat, as if enveloped in an ocean of thought. The inquiry into this atrocious crime was already beginning to tell and wear upon the witness. Her face again wore a troubled expression. She answered after a brief pause: "It must have been fifteen or twenty minutes after."

"And did Mrs. Worthington tell you to serve the meal earlier upon this occasion?"

"Yes sir."

"How much earlier?"

"Well, she merely gave me orders to have an earlier supper, as she usually did when Mr. Worthington chanced to return sooner."

"Miss Shaler, when you passed to the door of the library whom did you see?"

"Mr. Worthington."

"Any one else?"

"No sir."

"Did you step into the library?"

"No sir."

"Then you merely pushed the door open and looked in, as you stood in the hall very near the library door?"

"Yes sir."

"Did you push open the door wide enough



to admit of your entrance into the library had you seen fit to enter?"

The witness now gazed at the coroner in a hesitating manner, as if a little confused. Coroner Grant seeing this immediately said: "Miss Shaler, what I mean to say is, did you open the door wide enough for any ordinary sized person, as yourself for instance, to have passed in?"

"Yes sir, probably so."

"Did you say anything to Mr. Worthington?"

"Yes sir."

"What did you say to him?"

"As I saw him writing at his desk I simply begged pardon for the intrusion, after which I stated that I was in search of Mrs. Worthington, and thought she was in the library."

"Did Mr. Worthington make any reply to this?"

"No sir, and I thought it so strange."

"Why did you think strange of it?"

"Because he had always before recognized me by giving some kind reply."

After saying this tears sprang to the eyes of the witness, and a corner of the handkerchief trembled noticeably in her hand, as coroner Grant asked: "Did he not even glance up?"

After a short pause she answered: "If he did so, I do not distinctly remember."

"Miss Shaler, when you opened the door, do we understand that you pushed it just far enough to see Mr. Worthington sitting at his writing desk?"

"No sir, for it was after glancing at the lounge to the left of the writing desk and where I was accustomed seeing Mrs. Worthington sitting, that I began excusing myself for my interruption, seeing that it was not occupied by Mrs. Worthington."

"Miss Shaler, did you ever have occasion to visit the library before, seeking Mrs. Worthington?"

"Yes sir, I had quite frequently done so."

"Miss Shaler, please tell where the writing desk is situated in the library?"

"Opposite the door leading from the hall, and on the other side of the room near by an east window, the only window in the room."

"And where was the lounge of which you spoke?"

"Near the writing desk and a little to the left."

"Miss Shaler, then there must have been a portion of the room hidden from your view by the door when you glanced in?"

"Yes sir."

"What portion of the room was that?"

"The portion on the opposite side of the door. I could not see through the door, there being no glass in it."

"Then Miss Shaler, there could have been a person in that portion of the room not visible, without you knowing it, by reason of the door cutting off your view?"

"Yes sir, there could have been," said the witness.

"But do you think any one could have been in that portion of the room open to your view, other than the attorney without escaping your notice?"

"As to that I could not say positively, as I was looking only for Mrs. Worthington."

"At least you did not see any other person?"

"No sir."

"Miss Shaler, while you were preparing supper, did you see or hear anything that may now awaken a suspicion in your mind?"

Again the witness assumes the meditative mood. Finally she said, as the thumb of her right hand, and the one in which she now held the handkerchief, was seen to twitch nervously: "Yes sir. I remember one little incident."

"What was that, Miss Shaler?"

"I was returning with a bucket of water drawn from the well, when the dog ran by me barking viciously."

Here she stopped and the coroner said :

"And you now connect this action on the part of the dog with the crime?"

"Yes sir, but I thought little of it at the time and before I knew what had happened to Mr. Worthington, but after the fearful discovery was made I remembered it."

"Does not the same dog bark at people passing by upon the public road?"

"Yes sir, I think he has been known to."

"Why then did you so connect the barking of the dog with the event?"

"It was not only his barking but his running around to the side of the house upon which the library is located that prompted me to recall it after knowing what had happened."

"Then Miss Shaler, with what act on the part of the criminal did you connect the dog's actions?"

"I thought that after committing the crime he might have left the house, by way of the library window, and while escaping in his hurried flight, might have been detected by the dog."

One of the jurymen, who had been very nervously glancing around and shifting considerably upon his chair, now and then taking from and replacing an old

faded red silk handkerchief from his outer upper coat pocket with which he occasionally wiped the perspiration from off his roseate cheeks and neck, now took the liberty to ask: "Miss Shaler, has there ever been, to your knowledge, any trouble existing among the members of the Worthington family?"

To this, Miss Shaler remarked: "There has never been any quarrels that I know of."

At this point another member of the jury, who sat in the first row, and upon an end seat farthest away from the witness, asked: "Have you ever heard any remark uttered by any one of the family that may be construed to have a bearing upon this case?"

She glanced keenly at the jurymen who had addressed her. The first jurymen, at the question put by the second, simply nodded his approval which indicated that he was desirous of asking another, but seeing that he had been forestalled by his fellow-jurymen, only nodded his head in affirmation. The witness answered: "I can recall nothing unless you wish to accept the idle talk of a little child." This last remark, of course, elicited a burst of surprise. It was evident that a key note had been sounded, and the witness in her vain attempts to evade further questioning, by assuming that a little child's bauble might go for

naught, utterly failed, for it actually opened up a new avenue of investigation.

The jury now remained silent, but the coroner asked: "Miss Shaler, you refer to whose child?"

"To Mr. Worthington's little son, Howard."

"Miss Shaler, we would be pleased to hear of that talk, so please state what the little one said, that prompted you to speak of it, on being questioned."

"It was while playing in the kitchen that I chanced to overhear him make a remark which at the time only caused me to stop for a moment. It was so trivial that I don't know that it will be of any importance to you." Here she paused and glanced at Mr. Grant very composedly.

"Miss Shaler, you have not answered. Please state what the child said."

Said the witness: "He merely said as I now recall it, 'my papa don't want that man to come to see Eva.' " Here the witness stopped.

"Was that all?" inquired Mr. Grant.

"Well, the rest was so innocent and child-like."

"The rest, what was it, please state," said the coroner.

"After saying what I told you, he laughingly said something about his little gun, ending by saying that he would shoot him if he came back."

"Miss Shaler. do you know to whom the child referred?"

"No sir, I do not."

"Miss Shaler. do you know who killed Mr. Worthington?"

Her answer to this pointed question came without the slightest degree of reserve or hesitancy; for she immediately answered: "No sir," said in a clear unfaltering tone.

Mr. Grant dismissed the witness and the inquiry closed, to be again resumed the next morning.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### EVA'S DISAPPEARANCE.

On the following morning the jury convened at nine o'clock, the appointed hour. Long before this there had assembled a great crowd without, clamoring to gain admittance; but this time due precaution had been taken. Officers having authority to act were detailed to guard the doors, being very careful to admit only those whose extreme interest demanded their presence. In the room could be seen not a few strange faces, strange however, because they were not present at the previous day's inquest. There was a hush for a short time preceding the opening of the inquest—such a feeling stillness, as usually precedes a vivid streak of lightning followed instantly by a startling clap of thunder on a hot summer day, and with a sky almost cloudless. At a few minutes past nine, coroner Grant called the next witness. He said: "Is Miss Eva Worthington in the room?" There came no response, and it was soon ascertained that she was not present, whereupon Mr. Grant spoke a few words



in the ear of the infallible "stranger," who occupied the same seat that he did upon the previous day.

He immediately rose and left the room after which the coroner beckoned Mr. Hinckle to draw near; when, after whispering a few words in his ear, he passed out into the hall and to the dining room where he met his old friend Mr. Hammer who had been denominated as the "stranger."

The reader has perhaps already surmised the reason for these two gentlemen being thus sent from the room, for it was their purpose to produce Eva Worthington, as the next witness, she having already been called, and also informed that she would very probably be the first witness called that day. Why she was not waiting in readiness to answer the call was somewhat mysterious, as depicted upon the faces of coroner Grant and the two grim officers who had just withdrawn from the room in quest of her.

This delay caused, indeed, much chagrin on the part of Mr. Grant. After Mr. Hinckle had met Mr. Hammer in the dining room, they at once stepped to a door opening into the stairway and ascended. When at the first landing they stepped a few feet to the left, and found themselves in a large hall. Mr. Hinckle who was in front took a few steps forward, when on

glancing to the far end of it and towards a window looking out on the front yard, his eyes finally rested upon a side door containing a large glass on which was printed the word "Study." They advanced cautiously a few steps and then halted, for a few moments and listened, Mr. Hinckle being still in the lead. Hearing nothing Mr. Hinckle crept up close to the door and bowed his head, almost pressing his ear against the glass. He thus listened intently for a short period, but was unable to see into the study by reason of a very rich and deeply embroidered curtain being hung up on the opposite side of the door. Mr. Hinckle then stole back to where his friend was, and told him that it was useless to delay matters. Retracing his footsteps he knocked gently on the door. It brought no response. He knocked again, but all was silent within.

Mr. Hinckle then turned the door-knob, but soon discovered that the door was locked. He tried again, but it did not yield. He was now convinced that it was, indeed, locked. Then he called: "Miss Eva!" There came no answer.

These two men now decided to go below and interrogate Miss Shaler. This, they did. On reaching the kitchen they found Miss Shaler actively engaged

in sweeping. It was Mr. Hinckle who first addressed her, by saying: "Miss Shaler, we have been up stairs and can find no trace of Miss Worthington. She is wanted as a witness at the inquest."

"Is she not in the study?" asked Miss Shaler.

"The door of the study we found locked, and on calling her name, there came no reply."

At this news the servant girl stood terrified, her eyes actually flashing with wonder and surprise, her countenance quivering with excitement. She cast the broom aside, and at once passed through the dining room and ascended the stairs followed closely by Mr. Hinckle and his friend. She went immediately to the door leading into Eva's sleeping room which was situated across the hall and directly opposite the study.

Seeing that the servant girl had opened the door, and on hearing her remark as she entered that it was Miss Eva's sleeping room, both men curteously stepped back a few feet to await the result of Miss Shaler's investigation. They did not wait long, however, for she was heard to exclaim, "My stars!" followed by: "What can this mean?" After this she stepped back into the hall, and walked across to the door of the study. "Well, I do declare!—this, is mysterious. Why, I thought Miss Eva——," and here she paused

after which she tried to open the door. Then turning, the very embodiment of surprise depicted on her countenance, she calmly surveyed the two gentlemen. This picture was presented but for a moment, for almost immediately she passed rapidly by them without uttering another word, and ascended the second flight of stairs leaving Mr. Hinckle and his friend below. They did not immediately follow, Mr. Hinckle merely stepping out upon the first landing to gaze after this strange creature, as she hastily ascended the second flight. Passing out of his sight Mr. Hinckle placed a foot on the first stair step, and turning his head sidewise assumed a listener's attitude. He could hear her call for Eva, but no response came. Again she called, but no reply. Now a deep silence paraded the upper rooms and halls.

After tolerating this suspense for a little while longer, and knowing that the jury and coroner were awaiting the appearance of Miss Worthington, Mr. Hinckle now boldly marched up the second flight, Mr. Hammer following. They soon reached the top of the stairway, and passed out into another hall very similar to the one below, though not quite so large, there being rooms on either side, with one to the rear end.

As Mr. Hinckle and his friend hurried to a room on

the right (observing the door leading therein to be open), they were suddenly confronted by Miss Shaler whose pale face was indicative of much fright and terror; so much so, that it was readily detected by Mr. Hinckle, her manner and countenance being too greatly changed in that short interval to be caused by the mere fact of Eva's temporary absence.

All this led to the conclusion that this strange acting girl must certainly know something more than any one had, as yet, surmised. Mr. Hinckle next proceeded to the reception room, leaving his friend in the presence of Miss Shaler. On reaching the inquest room he immediately informed the coroner that Miss Worthington's whereabouts could not be definitely ascertained, and importuned him to proceed with the inquest by calling the next witness. Coroner Grant immediately acquiesced, deciding to omit the testimony of Miss Worthington for the time being, rather than await her arrival, thinking after receiving assurances from Mr. Hinckle, that she would certainly appear later, so he called the next witness the testimony of whom will be found farther on.

Mr. Hinckle did not remain in the room during the testimony of the next witness, for he felt, indeed much worried over the absence of Miss Worthington, for

his manner indicated at once to his friend, Mr. Hammer, that he was merely feigning in his pretensions to the coroner, when he told him that he thought Miss Worthington would put in an appearance in a short time; when, he would hold her in readiness. In fact, to Mr. Hammer, with whom Mr. Hinckle did not attempt any disguise, it was quite evident that his senior partner in this affair, entertained vague and shadowy fears, lest something bordering upon the sensational might spring from the seemingly temporary absence of this young lady.

After Mr. Hinckle had passed below to inform Mr. Grant, he was followed a little while after, by Miss Shaler, who seemed quite reticent in the presence of Mr. Hammer. She passed into the kitchen while Mr. Hammer walked towards the reception room, meeting Mr. Hinckle in the hall. It was while there that Mr. Hinckle informed his friend what he had told the coroner regarding Eva's disappearance and instructed him to remain in the reception room during the testimony of the next witness, while he would busy himself in looking further after the whereabouts of Miss Worthington.

Dr. Druid was the next witness called to give testimony. He was present, and as he took the witness

chair, interest at once became manifest by the hushed silence that swept over the room, like a chill over the body. All eyes became riveted upon the doctor, as the coroner said: "Your name I am told is William Henry Druid."

"Yes sir, that is my name," said the doctor.

"Mr. Druid, what is your occupation?"

"I am a medical practitioner."

Said Mr. Grant: "Doctor, how long have you been actively engaged as a physician?"

"Twenty years."

"And have you always resided in this neighborhood?"

"Yes sir."

"Then your practice is principally confined to this immediate neighborhood?"

"Yes sir. I should judge, approximately speaking, within a radius of five miles, but I am quite frequently called some considerable distance to treat patients; also, to the city."

"Now doctor, under what circumstances were you informed of the shooting of Mr. Worthington?"

"I was not informed of the shooting at all."

"Well then, when did you first hear that he was shot?"

"I did not know what had happened until I walked from my office to the house, and into the library of Attorney Worthington."

"You then, immediately realized what had occurred?"

"After some examination, I found a wound in his head which I concluded might have been the result of a bullet fired from some weapon, as a pistol."

"Doctor you say you discovered a wound in his head: Now, you may state in what part of the head, the wound was inflicted."

"In about the center of the back part, piercing the extreme lower part of the occipital bone."

"We are told, doctor, that Mr. Worthington was still living when you arrived."

"Yes sir, he was."

"Now, you may please state what action you took first in the way of rendering medical assistance."

"After entering, I at once explored the pulse of his right wrist after which I immediately administered restoratives in the form of a stimulant."

"Then you discovered a pulsation?"

"Yes sir, but very slight, for the shadow of death was rapidly advancing."

"Doctor, did you move the attorney before death came?"



"Yes sir."

"Where did you place him?"

"On a large folding lounge that was stationed in the room, and which I ordered rapidly prepared."

"He was still alive then when placed on the lounge?"

"Yes sir."

"Did any one else of your profession assist you?"

"No sir."

"Was there any skilled or competent physician present other than yourself?"

"No sir, not to my knowledge."

"Did you make any exertion to secure any?"

"Yes sir."

"Was this done soon after your discovery?"

"Yes sir."

"How was this done?"

"My wife who came in some little time after my arrival was instructed to telephone for Dr. Mann."

"When did Dr. Mann arrive?"

"Not long after the death of Mr. Worthington."

"Doctor, how long had Mr. Worthington been shot before you arrived?"

"Not longer than half an hour, I should conclude."

"Doctor, you live in the first house to the left going towards the city, do you not?"

"Yes sir."

"About how far is that from here?"

"Not more than two hundred yards."

"Then you were quite well acquainted with Mr. Worthington?"

"Yes sir, quite well."

"Doctor what relation was you to Mr. Worthington?"

"He was my brother-in-law, having married my wife's sister."

"Were you accustomed to seeing or meeting him very frequently?"

"Yes sir."

"And to converse with him?"

"Yes sir."

"When did you last talk with him?"

There was a pause. The doctor, was evidently endeavoring to recall the time and circumstance. Matters were not long delayed, however, for the doctor glanced up quickly and said: "Oh yes, I now remember meeting him at Lawrence station. I recall it now, very distinctly. It was only last Thursday evening that I met him just after he had alighted from an outgoing train. He was walking toward the carriage which was in waiting for him some little distance from the depot."

"Did he seem noticeably depressed or low-spirited at that time?"

"No sir, quite the opposite, for he greeted me very cordially, even extending me his hand; however, sociability, and complaisantness of manner were among his chief characteristics."

"You have been the regular physician of the Worthington family for how long, doctor?"

"Well, I cannot exactly remember, but I think at least ten years."

"During this time, doctor, have you ever had occasion to treat Mr. Worthington?"

"Yes sir, only once or twice for some trivial disorder caused by slight colds; Mr. Worthington always being a very robust and healthful man."

"Then you have never known Mr. Worthington to possess any great disability or incurable malady, that might have goaded him to take his own life?"

The doctor now elevated his right hand, and pushed his fingers through the massive iron gray locks that were wreathing the right side of his noble looking forehead and said: "No sir;" while a smile of incredulity took possession of his countenance, and his glance seemed to plant conclusion in the mind of every juror.

"Doctor, while Mr. Worthington was living did you know of any trouble in his family relations?"

"None, whatever."

"What was the character of the attorney in reference to the treatment of his family?"

"Very kind and gentle, and the most pleasant domestic relationship, I think, always existed, for I never heard anything to the contrary."

"Did you succeed in recovering the ball which must have imbedded itself in the brain of the attorney?"

"Yes sir."

"Does this look anything like it?" said the coroner holding up a battered bullet between the thumb and fore finger of his right hand. The doctor leaned a little forward, so as to get a better view; whereupon, the coroner seeing this, passed it to the witness, and, as it dropped into the doctor's hand he at once recognized it as the one taken from the attorney's brain. The witness answered: "Yes sir, this is the bullet."

"Now doctor, do you think from the nature and appearance of the wound that the pistol or weapon was held near the head, or some distance away when the fatal shot was fired?"

"It was surely fired at some distance away."

"Please explain how this fact may be ascertained."

"If the weapon had been pressed directly against or near the head, the hair, very probably, would have been burnt, also the flesh lying contiguous to the wound would have been blackened, caused by being powder burnt."

"Doctor, in concluding your testimony have you anything definite to say, as to who committed the crime?"

It was a question of supreme importance, and all in the room sat spell bound. Attention, spread and held its dark pinions in hushed suspense for some time, before the witness made ready to reply. The doctor shifted uneasily in his chair. The time of an allotted pulsation seemed to grow into minutes, but finally the doctor turned and facing Mr. Grant said: "Your last question, I hoped would not be put, at this stage of the proceedings, but as I am a sworn witness, and knew my friend only to respect, trust and honor him, I shall now not attempt to palliate the chance of unveiling the perpetrator of this awful crime. The doctor stopped after the above declaration, evidently waiting a question from the coroner. At last the coroner asked: "Doctor, we are ready to receive such information, so you may please proceed."

Said the doctor: "As I was on my way home last

Saturday evening and almost in front of this residence, I chanced to glance toward the house. I saw a vivid flash of light through the raised window of Mr. Worthington's library. I thought little of it at the time, thinking it might be that the attorney was merely striking a match with which to light a cigar or a lamp. My horse was traveling rapidly and the view was but momentary."

"Doctor, what time was it when you saw the flash of light of which you speak?"

"I think it must have been after seven o'clock."

"Now doctor, have you further seen or heard anything of a suspicious nature, that might lead to the discovery of the guilty?"

"No sir."

"Have you anything further to add?"

"No sir."

Coroner Grant, now waved the witness from the chair.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SENSATIONAL REVELINGS.

The next witness called to appear before the coroner and jury was Mr. Hinckle himself. The one who was first to swing open the door, cross the threshold and enter the room so soon after the hand of an assassin had shattered the brain and stilled the pulse of one who was known only to be revered and honored by his fellow countryman: Of one of the most eminent in his profession: Of a parent and husband whose kindness and indulgence knew no bounds.

Ah, my kind reader, as we pause and mentally gaze upon the one dark and horrible picture, portraying to ourselves the conscious, knowing, but unscrupulous and cowardly villain, stealing upon his victim, this noble father, husband and citizen, bearing with him the instrument, containing the leaden messenger of death; and, the other portrait of justice, depicting the entrance so soon after of that stern guardian of the law, one whose duty it is to assist in balancing the scales of justice, how striking the contrast! How varied and

checked the ever shifting phases of human existence!

Under the most trying circumstances did Mr. Hinckle respond when Mr. Grant called his name and requested him to occupy the witness chair. Mr. Hinckle was suffering from the effects of a severe headache, and it was quite evident from his countenance that he was mentally tired out, for the eye, "the window of the soul," told all too plainly of his extreme sorrow for the dead, and bereaved; also, his almost forced feeling of pity for the one whom he could hardly believe guilty.

Although of strong build and determination, used to contact with all classes traveling the common walks of life, and knowing their sorrows and aggrandizement, it did not seem to assuage his emotional cords of sympathy and sorrow in this particular instance. As he glanced around the room, in his breast there heaved a sigh of despair and utter hopelessness for the base flesh that had ever ventured on to such daring and dangerous lengths, with the almost inevitable chasm of discovery at the end, yawning and awaiting the precipitation of the victim.

To the coroner's first question, "Mr. Hinckle what is your occupation?" the witness answered "I am employed as a detective."



"Mr. Hinckle, how long have you been thus employed?"

"For nearly twelve years."

"Mr. Hinckle, we have been told that you were the first to discover Mr. Worthington in his library after being shot."

"Yes sir, I have every reason to think so."

"How came this Hr. Hinckle?"

Mr. Hinckle now leaned forward in the chair, and resting his left fore-arm on the arm of the chair, with right hand enveloped in a loop of his watch chain, he said: "On the evening of last Saturday I had occasion to see the district attorney on some business complication in my profession. As I stepped from the public road and upon the drive in the front yard, I noticed the front door was standing wide open. I proceeded up the veranda steps and walked to the open doorway. On reaching it I saw Miss Eva Worthington standing in front of the door of her father's library. I addressed her, and then entered the hall, having met and been introduced to her on a previous visit to the attorney's home. Approaching somewhat nearer I noticed that her features turned quite pale-like, as she asked me if I had seen her father, out in front, to which I at once answered in the

negative, not having seen or met him. She then turned and seemed somewhat dejected and low-spirited. I interrogated her as to whether he was in the library, as I usually found him there at that time of the evening, and this fact alone prompted me to ask. No sooner had I done so than she pleadingly besought me to open the library door for she then said that she feared. I did so immediately, only to find Mr. Worthington lying at full length upon the carpet, alongside his writing desk."

Mr. Hinckle spoke the above facts in clear deliberate tones, commanding great interest and attention. Not a member of the jury was seen to move during the recital of one of the most important witnesses who was likely to be called in the case. Said the coroner:

"Mr. Hinckle what did you then do?"

"I called to Miss Worthington."

"And then?"

"I then approached nearer and dropping on one knee I at once saw that Mr. Worthington was shot in the back part of the head."

"How did you observe this fact?"

"I saw the blood on the carpet and on closer scrutiny I discovered the wound situated as before stated."

"Mr. Hinckle, you say you saw the attorney was

shot. Now tell even after your discovery, how you really knew he was shot?"

"It was my first impression, which was at once corroborated when I rose, and chancing to glance at the writing desk, I observed this lying on the desk." Here the witness quickly reached to his hip pocket and drew forth a pistol.

The curiosity and interest of all present were now at fever heat, and every member of the jury actually bent forward in their seats, lest something might escape their notice. Being requested, the witness passed the weapon to the coroner, who now asked with some degree of abruptness: "Where did you find this weapon?"

"I found it lying upon the writing desk in Mr. Worthington's library, as I previously stated."

Again Mr. Grant asked with an air of surprise: "When did you first take possession of it?"

"The moment I saw it after entering the library last Saturday evening, and before Mrs. Worthington and her daughter, Miss Eva, came into the room."

Coroner Grant now gazed at the witness in blank astonishment. It will be remembered that the witness did not deem it at all necessary to reveal this discovery to the coroner; so was the opinion of Chief Meryle,

for Mr. Grant was quite young and inexperienced, but showed a remarkable degree of ingenuity in gleaning truths and salient facts from witnesses. The coroner plainly showed by his manner and speech that he thought he had been slighted, for he said:

"This is news," as he looked distrustfully at the witness.

"Then Mrs. Worthington, or her daughter knows nothing in regard to the discovery of the pistol?"

"Yes sir Miss Worthington does for I presented it to her yesterday," said the witness.

Mr. Grant who had all the while been so intimate with Mr. Hinckle in his investigations and communications, now shifted slightly in his chair, and assuming a more directly facing position, asked:

"Why did you so secretly take possession of the weapon?"

"Your question does not really require an answer from one of my profession, however, I will here state, that the chief delegates us the prerogative of acting, whether under order or not; deferred action causing us to be obligatorily responsible for failure to act in certain contingencies."

This seemed to pacify the coroner, for he next very

kindly asked: "Mr. Hinckle, did you find the pistol loaded?"

"Yes sir, four of the chambers containing loaded cartridges, and one being empty."

"Was the pistol found recognized by Miss Worthington, as one belonging to her father?"

"Yes sir."

"What was there about the weapon that caused her to recognize it?"

"By the initials, J. B. W. being cut in the handle."

"What did Miss Worthington say in reference to the pistol?"

- "She said that she had heard her father say some time previous that he intended taking it to the city, as something was wrong with the cylinder."

"And did she say that he really did take it to the city?"

"She said she did not know."

"Now Mr. Hinckle, did you find any other object that might be used and received as evidence?"

"Yes sir."

"Please state what it is, and if you have the article in your possession, you may produce it."

At this Mr. Hinckle drew from his inside coat pocket an envelope, not addressed. He immediately

drew forth its contents and said: "This I found lying on the writing desk the evening I made the discovery."

Mr. Grant then said: "Mr. Hinckle, please read what is written upon the paper."

In a very distinct tone Mr. Hinckle read the unfinished will of attorney Worthington, which has already been given and ending with:—*and the remaining two-ninths, I bequeath to my daughter, Eva ; but, on condition, that she marry one C*

Here it will be remembered that the will was left unfinished.

During the reading of this startling document, the contents of which were only known to a few, never before had a body of men acting as jurors, demonstrated such marked interest. It did really seem that every word of the will had made its imprint upon the very folds and convolutions of their brains.

"Mr. Hinckle is there anything written on that paper that might be used in discovering the identity of the person to whom attorney Worthington was about to refer, when he ceased writing?"

"There is one important point," remarked the witness.

"What is that?"

Mr. Hinckle now passed the paper to Mr. Grant,

saying: "You will observe an unfinished letter at the close, the beginning of the initial letter of the name of the person about to be written when the deed, no doubt, was committed."

"I see," said Mr. Grant, and he passed it to the jury, for he was conversant with this fact, however, it was a polite way of getting it before the jury. Each member in turn gazed at the paper, and in a little while Mr. Grant began to ply this important witness with more questions. Mr. Grant asked:

"Mr. Hinckle, have you discovered whom the unfinished initial letter was intended to represent?"

"We do not know positively, but are slowly gathering clues, which in my opinion will place some one not far distant in the toils of the law."

"Mr. Hinckle would it interfere with your work to tell what letter it would have formed, had it been completed?"

Mr. Hinckle now produced a small name and address card and said, as he passed it to Mr. Grant: "You may infer from the name written upon this card."

Mr. Grant gave it a hurried glance, and then passed it on to the end juryman, sitting nearest to him. Soon

all had read what had been printed upon the card which read as follows :

Claude Nicholas,  
4545 E. Kumpton St.,  
Cincinnati, O.

“Claude Nicholas,” said the coroner. “Then you think the unfinished letter was intended for the capital letter C do you not?”

Mr. Hinckle simply nodded his assent.

“Mr Hinckle have you positive proof that Claude Nicholas committed the crime?”

“No sir.”

Then Mr. Grant asked: “Who is this Claude Nicholas?”

“I do not know more than he is an attorney, and boards and rooms at the place indicated on the card. He is also a suitor for the hand of Miss Eva Worthington.”

The jurymen now glanced significantly at each other, while a low murmur passed among the few spectators present, as they naturally began to think that it might be very uncomfortable for Mr. Nicholas were he there.

“Mr. Hinckle, is Mr. Nicholas close at hand?”



"Yes sir, I think he will be here soon."

"Now Mr. Hinckle, have you any further evidence, relative to this person whose name we saw written upon the card?"

Mr. Hinckle now produced another letter this time bearing the name and address: J. B. Worthington, Grandin, O., and as he held it up Mr. Grant requested him to read. Mr. Hinckle quickly drew a letter from the envelope and read as follows:

Aug. 14, 1898.

Att'y J. B. Worthington,  
Grandin, Ohio.

Kind Sir:—

Owing to some timidity on my part to personally approach you upon the delicacy of the subject at hand, and knowing that your business affairs are so active, as not to admit of an interview, I herein take the liberty through the medium of correspondence, and the courtesy of a long established practice, that, after having obtained the consent of your daughter Eva for her hand in marriage, I most gratefully appeal to you for approval and willingness, that perfect harmony be insured.

Yours very gratefully,  
Claude Nicholas.

The above letter was read emphatically, being perfectly audible to all present, Mr. Hinckle maintaining that firmness usually characteristic to one of his profession. Said the coroner:

"Mr. Hinckle, where did you procure that letter?"

"I found it lying beside the will paper."

"Did you take possession of it at the same time that you picked up the will paper?"

"Yes sir."

"Now, Mr. Hinckle, have you any thing else that might be considered important in the investigation?"

Mr. Hinckle now drew a small tin box from a pocket in his vest, and as he held it up slantingly towards the jury, said:

"This I deem as very important."

The spectators upon the sides craned their necks humorously to catch a glimpse of the contents of the box. After they all had gazed at it for a while Mr. Grant asked:

"Mr. Hinckle what import are we to gain from that little tin box?"

Said Mr. Hinckle: "You are to gain nothing from the little tin box," but after gazing momentarily at the coroner and jury, he added: "It is the contents to which I wish to call your attention."

"The contents! why I don't see any contents," said the coroner.

A cloud had obscured the sunlight just as Mr. Hinckle held up the box and thereby caused that part of the room where the witness stand was located to be somewhat darkened, so much so, indeed, that it rendered the contents of the box not distinctly discernible; especially from where the coroner was stationed. This fact alone led to the last query of the coroner. After Mr. Grant had declared himself as seeing no contents, detective Hinckle carefully handed the box over to Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant smiled grimly when he saw the contents of the box, after which he passed it to the jury. Each member passing it to his nearest associate, smiling as did the coroner. After all had viewed the contents of the box, it was handed back to Mr. Hinckle who very carefully placed the lid on it and restored it to his vest pocket. Mr. Hinckle then glanced at the jury and gave his head a bow of affirmation. This provoked quite a smile from the jury and coroner, the rest in the room being in total ignorance as to what the little tin box contained; however, they, too, smiled with the jury and coroner. Mr. Grant now asked the witness where he procured the "nuggets," and of what im-

portance they were in the case. At this inquiry some of the jurymen who evidently had better eyesight than Mr. Grant, actually laughed outright. This hilarious turn of affairs however, was of very short duration, for Mr. Hinckle said: "You spoke something about 'nuggets,' but, gentlemen in order to pacify your curious minds, it will be well for me to state that those small particles are the true and original representative of man before the great God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. It is the tell-tale marks of an escaping criminal left upon the window-sill in his mad flight of escape which proves conclusively that Mr. Worthington was foully murdered."

This evidence put, indeed, a new phase upon matters.

"From what window-sill did you gather those particles?" asked Mr. Grant.

"From that of the library window," came the answer.

"When did you find them?"

"The next morning after the discovery."

"But Mr. Hinckle those particles of clay could have been there long before anything had happened to Mr. Worthington," said the coroner.

"Yes sir, that is all very true, but heel imprints

found upon the sill of an open window, and on the morning after a murder has been committed in the room having but one window, proves substantially and beyond question the method of exit on the part of the escaping criminal; and further, it makes it doubly corroborative when these little particles, which Mr. Grant was pleased to call 'nuggets,' were found enveloping a row of indentations made by the nails of a shoe or boot of an assassin."

There followed a pause. The echo of Mr. Hinckle's words seemed to hold all in the embrace of a spell-bound silence which was only broken some considerable time after by coroner Grant asking:

"Mr. Hinckle, are those indentations of which you speak really to be seen in the window sill?"

"Yes sir, they can be seen very plainly, and to further corroborate the truthfulness of what I have said, this jury, may also see upon the ground at a distance of about three feet from the window and under a milk crock an indentation made by the same boot or shoe."

Another slight pause followed. Finally Mr. Grant asked: "Mr. Hinckle, who placed the milk crock over the track of which you speak?"

"I did."

"For what purpose?"

"That the imprint might not be disturbed, so that it could be viewed and investigated by this legal body."

"Mr. Hinckle, how did the card bearing the name of Claude Nicholas, happen to fall into your possession?"

"The morning after the crime had been committed, Mr. Grant and I were standing in the hall when about ten o'clock, a stranger who seemed to be very deeply interested came in, and after being assured that attorney Worthington was dead, expressed a wish to see Miss Eva Worthington. This assumed privilege I denied, without giving explanations. He acted, at first, very indignant, not to be accorded the privilege. After some further conversation during which time he learned of my official position, he calmly yielded and it was then that he presented the card and kindly asked me to hand it to Miss Worthington, thereby signifying his presence and the desired interview."

"Did you present the card to Miss Worthington?"

"Yes sir."

"Was she disposed to grant an interview?"

"No sir, she said she could not see Mr. Nicholas just at that time, and seemed to be very much affected when the card was presented."

"Did the stranger, Mr. Nicholas, then leave?"

"Yes sir, in a short time."

"Does not Miss Worthington or her mother know of the existence of the will paper or letter?"

"Yes sir, and they are both simply dazed. They cannot account for them, being rather disposed to be reticent, but at the same time greatly affected."

"Mr. Hinckle, in the interview you had with Mrs. Worthington and her daughter did they make any accusation as to the guilty one?"

"No sir."

"Did they express themselves in reference to Claude Nicholas having any connection with the crime?"

"No sir."

"Then they did not even express themselves, as to who could have possibly committed the crime?"

"Well, Miss Worthington said in broken sobs that she did not think Mr. Nicholas, with no purpose or intention capable and guilty of such a dreadful deed. Mrs. Worthington remained silent, and in short, the interview with Mrs. Worthington and her daughter was rather abruptly terminated, for Mrs. Worthington again showed signs of great weakness and rather than push matters under such trying circumstances, I decided to seek another more favorable opportunity."

"Mr. Hinckle, when did this interview take place?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"And you have not spoken to them upon the subject since?"

"No sir."

"Now in conclusion Mr. Hinckle, I will ask you a question which may seem to be very incompatible."

Mr. Grant then asked:

"Do you think it could have been possible under any circumstance whatever, that Mr. Worthington could have shot himself accidentally or with intent, and the pistol have been found where it was?"

Mr. Hinckle answered: "People don't generally shoot themselves and then take the precaution of laying aside the pistol, neither do they take the time to jump on window-sills in their mad agony of pain, after a leaden bullet has entered their brain."

The remarks of the witness caused a murmur of sanction to steal over the room, as was demonstrated by the low conversation accompanied by a bow of approval. One rather heavy set juryman who sat in about the middle of the front row asked the question:

"Are you familiar with the *handwriting* of Claude Nicholas?"

Mr. Hinckle's eyes were indicative of surprise as he said: "No sir, not any further than is demonstrated by the writing upon the letter."



Here the stranger, who has already been introduced to the reader stepped in and hurriedly approaching the coroner, whispered a few words in his ear after which he immediately left the room.

Coroner Grant then brought the testimony to a close by asking :

"Mr. Hinckle, can you say positively who committed this crime?"

"No sir."

"But you no doubt have strong suspicions?"

"Yes sir, but suspicions are very fluctuating."

Mr. Grant then dismissed the witness after which he beckoned him to draw near. Mr. Hinckle did so. The conversation that ensued was but momentary, after which Mr. Hinckle hastily withdrew from the room when he met the stranger, his friend, Mr. Hammer, in the hall near the front entrance.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE VERDICT.

MR. HINCKLE's testimony being concluded, the coroner and jury immediately repaired to the library for the purpose of investigating the authenticity of the statements given out in Mr. Hinckle's testimony. The window sill was very closely examined, as was also, the heel track made in the ground and covered with a milk-crock. The track was found to be in a perfect state of preservation. After some further investigation, consisting of the gathering of minor points, the jury retired to the parlor for deliberation, the final object of which was the finding of a verdict.

The arrival of Mr. Hammer and his whispered conversation with Mr. Grant, followed closely by the termination of the inquest, would indicate that he had come with important news that demanded the immediate attention of Mr. Hinckle. Mr. Hinckle met Mr. Hammer in the hall, as previously stated, after leaving the witness stand. He listened to the story of Mr. Hammer in deep silence and surprise. A sullen air of

disappointment seemed to overspread his countenance. Mr. Hammer had told him that Claude Nicholas was nowhere to be found at Summer Mount, also that he could find no trace that he had ever been there. The letter mailed by Claude Nicholas at the post-office in the Government building stated clearly that he was going to Summer Mount, and could be found at the little hotel, "Crescent."

The letter was not difficult to recover, as it was found by Mr. Hinckle along with the others, carelessly lying on a small table in the center of the parlor the evening it had been received. It was merely a kind letter of condolence to Eva, and the family, stating that he would spend the next two weeks at Summer Mount, a little hamlet and resort, situated some fifteen miles or more from the city.

There was the letter, and Mr. Hinckle had arranged to have Mr. Nicholas placed on the stand at the conclusion of his own testimony. For this purpose, then, he had sent Mr. Hammer, who boarded a train at Lawrence station about noon of the same day, and according to the railroad schedule, Mr. Hammer could go to Summer Mount, bring back with him Claude Nicholas, all within a period of two hours. He was given four hours to accomplish this; time that was thought fully ample and sufficient.

Mr. Hinckle, as well as Mr. Hammer were, therefore, greatly troubled in consequence of the failure to locate Mr. Nicholas; also, over the strange disappearance of Eva Worthington. They could not account for it all, and it was quite apparent that these new developments were weighing very heavily upon their minds.

The only thing now that could be done, was to institute a thorough search for the missing parties. This new plan entirely changed the panorama of the already existing entanglements.

These two men of almost unequalled ability in their work, now began to indulge in mental speculations, as to what it all meant. Was the letter merely sent to Eva for the purpose of misleading? It did certainly seem so; but still, there may have been some delay in the arrival of Claude Nicholas at Summer Mount. Then again, Eva's disappearance, just at this time led to a further complication of affairs. Was it possible that Claude Nicholas had deliberately deceived these two wily officers of the law? There was the letter, written in plain unmistakable language that he had gone to Summer Mount. Still, no trace of him there yet, or at least, when Mr. Hammer had departed.

This mysterious fact, following so soon after the disappearance of Eva, mystified matters exceedingly.

Mr. Hinckle and his friend now passed upstairs and went directly to the study. They were closeted there for fully half an hour, and when they issued therefrom, immediately began searching the sleeping apartment of Miss Worthington.

They searched every nook and corner of the room, critically examining the drawers of the large dresser, which were all left unlocked. The wash-stand was not overlooked, and in fact, every article in the room was subjected to a most careful scrutiny, lest something of importance, bearing on the case might be overlooked.

All this investigation amounted to naught. What, then, could have become of Miss Worthington? She was not at the doctor's home, and Mrs. Worthington, who knew nothing of the disappearance of Eva, had, after the funeral of her husband, chosen to remain at the home of her sister, Mrs. Druid. Was it best to inform her? perhaps she could throw some light upon the mystery; but then again, her mind was in such a depressed state, as not to allow of any more strain. This was the decision of the doctor.

After some further consideration, Mr. Hinckle sent Mr. Hammer to the city to investigate the law office of Claude Nicholas; also, house No. 4545 East Kump-

ton Street, hoping thereby to gain some tangible clue to the whereabouts of Claude Nicholas; also, to pick up if possible, other points that might prove beneficial.

Mr. Hinckle remained long enough at the Worthington residence, to learn the outcome of the inquest which was given out as follows:

“The death of attorney J. B. Worthington was due to a shot from a pistol, fired by some unknown person, while writing in his library.”

This verdict, Mr. Hinckle anticipated, in the absence of the two witnesses who had so strangely disappeared.

## CHAPTER XIX.

BEWILDERMENT! BEWILDERMENT! BEWILDERMENT!

A SHORT time after Mr. Hammer had departed for the law office of Claude Nicholas, and to investigate his rooms at No. 4545 East Kumpton Street, Mr. Hinckle stepped into a carriage and was driven in the direction of Lawrence station. It was not long after he arrived there that he boarded an out-going train; the one upon which attorney Worthington usually came from the city on his way home.

We will first trace the movement of Mr. Hinckle. The train, which was a fast one, was soon thundering along in the direction of Summer Mount, a little hamlet built among the trees some fifteen or twenty miles from the city limits, and the supposed destination of Claude Nicholas, as stated in his letter to Eva Worthington.

The train was not long in reaching the cozy little station at Summer Mount, the next regular stop. Arriving there, Mr. Hinckle alighted, and with sachel in hand, soon found the little hotel "Crescent," a place at which he had frequently stopped.

After registering under a fictitious name, Mr. Hinckle carefully scanned the names of those who had registered within the previous two or three days, but neither the name of Claude Nicholas or Eva Worthington, could he see. This fact, however, did not lessen in any degree, the exertions of Mr. Hinckle, as he well knew that they could easily have written a fictitious name, also the handwriting could have been disguised. He studied each signature, but in none could he recognize the writing.

The hotel was situated some distance from the street, surrounded by front and side yards, containing a numerous and various collection of trees, the foliage of which contrasted grandly with the richly painted trimming of the hotel itself, with its smooth walks and beautiful flower beds surrounding.

As Mr. Hinckle stole out into the front yard, and took a seat on an old rustic bench, it would have afforded him much pleasure to have really thought that he had come hither for the purpose of passing a few weeks of rest and recreation at this typical summer resort. Mr. Hinckle sat there for a short time, inhaling the invigorating air of that calm summer evening, his mind engrossed in deep meditation. He then opened a newspaper which he had held folded in his hand.



To all appearances, he was soon busily engaged in perusing its contents, but other than glancing over the headlines, his eyes were riveted upon every one who chanced to pass to and from the hotel; also, the upper front windows were closely watched.

After an hour or more had elapsed, Mr. Hinckle passed around to the rear of the hotel, but saw no one he knew. A gay group of waiter-girls was merrily chatting on the back porch of this modern built structure of public reception.

Mr. Hinckle walked around the hotel and ascended the steps in front, leading to the main office. He walked in and took a seat in one of the corridors. A few moment's conversation with the proprietor, who passed out into the corridor not long after Mr. Hinckle had entered, was sufficient to convince the officer that neither Claude Nicholas nor Eva Worthington were stopping at the hotel.

Summer Mount, at this time was an active little village containing a few business houses; also, some manufacturing establishments, but the most beautiful part was in the vicinity of the hotel.

Besides the hotel, there were not a few boarding houses, which at this season were headquarters for a great many guests, tourists and pleasure seekers.

Mr. Hinckle decided to remain at the hotel all night, and then go back to the Worthington home the next morning, provided he could find no trace of the whereabouts of Claude Nicholas or Eva Worthington at Summer Mount. With a view of locating them, he took a stroll through that portion of the village most thickly built up with boarding houses.

All those who were seated in yards, and upon the verandas of the various boarding places, met his stern glance as he passed by. After an hour's walk he finally sauntered back to the hotel, and took lodging for the night, there being no train to the city, stopping at Summer Mount until early the following morning.

After finishing his supper he sought out his room, resolved, after the excitement and mental strain of the past few days, to seek relief in being all alone, where out of the view of any human eye, he might concentrate his thoughts and arrive at some definite conclusion in the way of successfully meeting present complications.

Mr. Hinckle sat in the room assigned to him until nearly midnight before retiring. All this time he had scarcely changed position in the easy chair upon which he was sitting, so engrossed were his thoughts in revolving the facts as they presented themselves in specular brilliancy.

At last, after arising and pacing to and fro for a little while, he lay down upon the foot of the bed, without undressing; but so heavily had been the pressure in the present case that repose came to this skilled and experienced official, as it had never come before; for, all through the remainder of that long night, did he toss about his bed, muttering every now and then to himself in earnest somniloquy.

Mr. Hinckle arose quite early on the following morning and without awaiting refreshments, left the hotel and proceeded immediately to the station where he boarded the first train going to the city. As he sat in the coach, while on his way back, his very frame ached, and his entire nervous system seemed to be unstrung.

He knew that the sleep at the little hotel "Crescent" had done him little or no good. Mr. Hammer, then, was right. No trace of Claude Nicholas or Eva Worthington at Summer Mount. Why then, did he not accept the word of Mr. Hammer? Why had he gone thither, himself? For the first time this great detective seemed greatly baffled, the reasons for which will be made plain as the narrative proceeds.

While lying across the foot of the bed in his room at the hotel the previous night, there suddenly darted into his mind the strange and impressive actions of Miss

Shaler, after she had withdrawn from the sleeping room of Eva Worthington, whom she was at that time seeking.

It will be borne in mind that Miss Shaler seemed shocked with surprise, as was evident from the ejaculation that she made. Mr. Hinckle thought it very queer at the time, but again thinking it due to the mere disappearance of Eva, gave it no further consideration, until lying on the bed as previously mentioned. He there reviewed her actions, also what she had said. This alone caused him to hasten back to the Worthington home.

After alighting from the train at Lawrence, Mr. Hinckle proceeded at once to a livery-stable near by, and engaged a carriage for the purpose of being driven to the Worthington home. Half an hour later the carriage drew up in front of the veranda at the Worthington residence.

Mr. Hinckle passed up the steps, and glancing at his watch, he observed that just fifty minutes had elapsed since he had left Summer Mount. Without any delay he proceeded to find Miss Shaler; so, without ringing the door-bell, he stepped in, and not meeting any one in the hall, or seeing any one in the reception room, as he passed the open doorway leading therein, he

passed on into the dining-room ; thence, to the kitchen, but no one was to be found. Once in the kitchen Mr. Hinckle advanced to about the center, when he stopped. He listened for some time, but could hear nothing. A solemn stillness reigned supreme, such as usually follows the sudden taking way of a beloved relative.

Mr. Hinckle then called her name, thinking she was near, the kitchen door having been left wide open. He waited, but no response came. Not a foot-step to be heard. He next passed on to the back kitchen door ; thence, down upon the brick pavement that surrounded the entire rear portion of the home. Looking around to the left and right, he saw no one, and after a moment's meditation, he directed his course towards the stable, hoping there to find Dennis, the coachman, who could possibly tell him of this strange absence. Arriving at the stable, Mr. Hinckle stepped through the open door-way and called loudly, regardless of the sullen growl of the old dog that lay stretched out in his former position when he had before made his presence known.

A wait, but no answer. What could this strange absence all mean ? No one near, yet every thing betraying signs to the contrary. Was it all a dream ? Had

he actually called? Was he indeed where he thought he was? Bewilderment! Bewilderment! He could not understand this state of affairs, and without passing to the little cottage where Dennis and his family lived (probably forgetting to do so), he walked from the stable, and with firm tread, cool and collected countenance, every delineation of which only gave more evidence of the strength of his powerful individuality, he passed back to the house, entered the kitchen, passed to the dining room; from there he ascended the first flight of stairs, stopping upon the landing, as he had done before when seeking Miss Worthington.

He could hear nothing, save the ticking of his watch in his vest pocket, as if keeping time with his slow but regular breathing. He did not remain there long, but quickly ascended the second flight, after which he proceeded straight to the room of Miss Shaler.

He found her room door open, and as he entered, his quick glance did not fail to notice a paper lying on the bed covers at the foot of the bed. He advanced and saw, at once, that it was a half sheet of commercial note. On picking it up he saw it was addressed to Miss Shaler and read as follows:—

Dear Miss Shaler:

I have been called away very suddenly. I trust it is

all for the best that I go. Try and comfort poor mamma until I return. It pains me sorely to go at this time, but I deem it absolutely necessary. I will be back in a day or two. Do not speak to any one of this.

Very affectionately,

Eva.

Surprise and wonder took complete possession of Mr. Hinckle, as he stood near the foot of the bed reading and rereading; finally, he folded the paper, and placed it into the old pocket book. He then directed his attention to a small dressing table, over which hung a large sized mirror. He hurriedly investigated the contents of the three lower drawers, the top one being securely locked. In the drawers left unlocked were found only clothing and apparel belonging no doubt to Miss Shaler; but as to the top drawer, this, was locked; how was he to gain access? Mr. Hinckle looked about, but no key to be found.

In a little while Mr. Hinckle incidentally leaned to one side, and placed his left hand upon one end of the marble slab, covering the top of the table. As he did so, he noticed the opposite end move upward a little. After removing a few small articles from off the slab, he

caught hold of the ends and drew upward. It was loose, but did not yield so readily. Another pull and it was removed, revealing the contents of the upper drawer. In it, were deposited a collection of various articles, some of which were souvenirs, no doubt, brought from Ireland, and having no real value in the case at hand. There was, however, situated in the right hand back corner of the drawer, a little package, neatly tied with a green ribbon, which Mr. Hinckle found to be composed entirely of letters, written by her friends in Ireland, a few coming from her sister in Cincinnati.

There was one, however, written by Eva Worthington, and directed to Miss Shaler. The letter was written while Eva was visiting her aunt in Cleveland the previous Summer. It was merely a friendly letter, stating how she was enjoying her visit, reciting little incidents of a jovial nature, and telling of a drive she had with a certain *Mr. Nicholas*, concluding with very tender words of affection and kind remembrances ; thus, indicating that her confidence, affection and regard for Miss Shaler were unshaken.

After reading of the little episode of Eva with a Mr. Nicholas in Cleveland, Mr. Hinckle then stood with the note, found on the foot of the bed, in one hand, and the letter, directed to her by Eva while at Cleveland, in the other.



While they quivered in his hands, he cast suspicious glances, first at the note, and then at the letter.

As may readily be seen, great importance must be attached to this discovery. It must be borne in mind that Mr. Hinckle knew nothing of the visit of Eva to Cleveland the previous summer; but now, the note left to Miss Shaler; the meeting of a certain Mr. Nicholas in her Cleveland letter; her present suitor, a Mr. Nicholas. These facts, coupled with Eva's strange absence, no wonder, caused a shadow of suspicion to steal over the mind of detective Hinckle.

The next task was to establish the identity of the Mr. Nicholas of Cleveland, and the one by the same name lodging at No. 4545 East Kumpton Street. The christian name was not given in the Cleveland letter, however, had it been, it would not have been sufficient to establish complete identity without further investigation. This, then demanded a trip to Cleveland.

Mr. Hinckle drew a railroad time table from his coat pocket. After glancing at it a few moments, he hastily passed from the room, descended the stairs and left the house; directing his foot-steps along the pulic high-way in the direction of Lawrence station.

In one hour after leaving the Worthington mansion, Mr. Hinckle boarded an in-coming accomodation train

at Lawrence. Twenty minutes afterwards, as he was passing through the depot at C.— he glanced up at the large clock, and found that his watch and the depot time were exactly together, being just nine o'clock A. M.

Mr. Hinckle passed from the depot, and boarded a street car that would land him nearest to the law office of Claude Nicholas, situated on Fifth street. He had not yet heard from his old friend Mr. Hammer, since they last parted previous to Mr. Hinckle's trip to Summer Mount.

On reaching Fifth street he alighted from the car, and boldly entered the building in which he well knew was situated the law office of Claude Nicholas, having been told definitely of the name and location by Mr. Hammer. There was a distance of five or six feet between the entrance door and the beginning of the first flight of stairs. Mr. Hinckle stopped before ascending the stairs, and began reading the names of the various law offices printed on the stair steps and along the sides. It did not take him long, however, to see the name of Claude Nicholas, Att'y at Law, Room No. 5, Second Floor.

On trying the door-knob he found that the door yielded. He at once entered, and as he did so, he

thought he heard a rustling sound, but on glancing around the room, he saw no one.

He was not mistaken, however, for as he entered Mr. Hammer passed quickly behind a revolving book-case, thereby causing him to be unobserved by Mr. Hinckle, as he entered. Mr. Hammer still continued to shield himself by means of the case, gradually circling around it, so as to keep on the opposite side, as Mr. Hinckle advanced toward the writing desk of Claude Nicholas. On reaching it, Mr. Hinckle tried the lid, and discovered it to be unlocked. He gently slid the lid back, and immediately began a close scrutiny of the papers lying on the lower shelf.

Mr. Hinckle was soliloquizing in low, earnest tones, every word of which was distinctly overheard by Mr. Hammer, when suddenly he was tapped on the right shoulder which caused him to cease his self-talking and give a quick start of surprise.

Looking around he was momentarily dazed at seeing his old friend, the stranger at the inquest, Mr. Hammer. After recovering a little, Mr. Hinckle said in his old familiar air of salutation, especially to his most intimate and trusted acquaintance. "Why Hammer, great Scott! you almost scared the wits out of me. How did you creep into this room unobserved?"

"I did not creep in at all," replied Mr. Hammer.

Mr. Hinckle looked puzzled, but after a moment's delay said: "How then?"

"Why Hinckle, I have been here the greater part of the morning," and advancing nearer the desk further remarked: "I have examined every scrap of paper in this desk, and was really in the act of withdrawing from the room when I heard you turn the door-knob. Not knowing who it was, and hoping to escape unobserved, I hastily stepped behind the bookcase."

"Oh, that indeed," remarked Mr. Hinckle, then adding: "I thought I heard a shuffle, as I entered, but not seeing any one, concluded it was merely a product of my own imagination."

## CHAPTER XX.

### AT MRS. MC CLURE'S BOARDING HOUSE.

A gentle puff of wind from a hall window or a neighboring attorney's office, caused the door to swing slowly open, as Mr. Hinckle made the remark closing the preceding chapter.

Seeing this, Mr. Hinckle who had turned and stood facing Mr. Hammer, now stepped lightly across the room and closed the door. Advancing Mr. Hinckle remarked: "How did you gain admittance into this office?"

Said Mr. Hammer: "That is not at all difficult when one is acquainted with the janitor of the building."

Seating himself in the attorney's chair, Mr. Hinckle now asked: "But tell me how you succeeded in opening this desk?" Presenting a small bunch of keys, and selecting out one Mr. Hammer replied:—"I opened it with this key."

Mr. Hinckle removed his straw hat and began fanning himself vigorously for the morning was intensely warm. Continuing this for some time he finally asked "Well Hammer, have you made any discovery?"

Mr. Hammer replied: "I have made a complete search here in this office, as well as at No. 4545 East Kumpton Street, and have found only one paper, that may prove of some value to us, all the other papers being of legal matters. I also found this," said Mr. Hammer, as he drew an ink-blotter from his coat pocket, and handed it to Mr. Hinckle for inspection.

Mr. Hinckle scanned it over very critically for a short time, looking first at one side and then at the other. Finally his eye caught sight of an impression near the center of the blotter, that seemed familiar to him. He then passed towards the window, and after giving the soaked up forms another look, he remarked: "Oh yes, friend Hammer I see."

Advancing back to a chair in which Mr. Hammer had seated himself, and situated a little to the right of the desk, Mr. Hinckle said: "Look here Mr. Hammer, this blotter has been pressed upon an envelope directed to Eva Worthington, for look at this."

"Yes," replied Mr. Hammer, continuing he added: "I think I saw Mr. Nicholas when he pressed the blotter upon the envelope." This provoked further interrogation and comment on the part of Mr. Hinckle.

Mr. Hammer then proceeded to acquaint him in detail of the circumstances, even pointing at the window,

and towards the opposite side of the street where he was standing while watching the movements of Claude Nicholas, the morning he mailed the letter, the very imprint of which was left on the blotter, now held in the hand of Mr. Hinckle.

For reasons of his own, Mr. Hammer had never told Mr. Hinckle of the peculiar and singular actions of Claude Nicholas, after entering his law office, and the subsequent mailing of the letter in the Government building, also, of his advancing to the window, and witnessing there the name and address of Eva Worthington written upon the envelope.

Mr. Hinckle next inquired as to the letter. Mr. Hammer had it secreted in his coat pocket along with the blotter; so, he at once passed it to Mr. Hinckle who found it to read as follows:

Grandin, Ohio,  
Aug. 4, 1897.

Mr. Claude Nicholas,  
22 Lake Ave.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Nicholas:—

I am so glad you have made definite arrangements to begin your practice in C.—' instead of Cleveland.

*At Mrs. McClure's Boarding House. 209*

Please accept my congratulations for your success attending the law examination. You will now be free from those arduous labors incumbent upon law students.

You certainly need relaxation and rest. I will be at home when you call.

Yours with kindness,  
Eva Worthington.

Mr. Hinckle read the letter, and without saying a word passed again to the window, Mr. Hammer still retaining his seat. After lighting a cigar, Mr. Hinckle turned and passed rapidly towards the door, telling Mr. Hammer to follow.

He did so. They left the building, and passed out into the street after which they boarded a street car that would pass by No. 54 Cenneth street, at which place Mr. Hinckle roomed when not on duty.

No conversation took place on the street car, relative to the affair, lest they might be overheard. When the car arrived at the corner of King and Cenneth streets, they alighted, Mr. Hinckle taking the lead; although, Mr. Hammer had often been to his room before.

The house designated, as No. 54 Cenneth street, was a common residence of no extensive proportion;



not a hotel, but only kept by a widow of very moderate circumstances, whose honesty, kindness, and hospitality constantly kept her spare rooms occupied by lodgers and boarders; this, being her only means of support.

Mr. Hinckle had not been to his room since the tragedy had occurred, and whenever he absented himself, if even for a day, he would always, through courtesy, announce his return; so he did this time; for while he left Mr. Hammer standing in the hall, Mr. Hinckle passed on and entered a side-door, leading into the kitchen where he found the widow, Mrs. McClure, at work. He kindly informed her that his return was of short duration, and that his room would require no immediate attention, as he would not be back for a day or two at least. Mr. Hinckle then passed back to where he had left his friend, and they ascended to an airy, comfortable, and well furnished front room on the second floor.

It was always kept in perfect readiness, everything in it bearing evidence that soft and skillful hands had set all to right; and above all, cleanliness made herself silently conspicuous under the gaze of the occupant or visitor.

After entering this commodious apartment they drew up chairs towards a side window, and began dis-

cussing the mystery in a low tone of voice; however, a few preliminary remarks were made first; for, said Mr. Hammer while in the act of drawing a chair towards the window: "You are feeling unwell to-day are you not?"

"Oh, quite as well as could be expected under existing circumstances," replied Mr. Hinckle.

Among other remarks, Mr. Hammer had overheard one soliloquized by Mr. Hinckle in Claude Nicholas' office, before making his presence known, that prompted him to make the last inquiry.

"Why do you think so?" calmly asked Mr. Hinckle.

"Because of what you said down at the office," replied Mr. Hammer.

Mr. Hinckle had not remained seated in the chair long, for after asking Mr. Hammer if he wished to wash, and receiving an answer of declination, he, himself had passed over to the washstand, and was washing his hands when Mr. Hammer made the last statement. Mr. Hinckle momentarily ceased his ablutions, and glancing around at Mr. Hammer said: "Something I said in the office? Why, did I say anything there that would cause you to think that I was not feeling well?"

"Yes, for you said something about 'pain', and at

the same time you placed your hand to your forehead. I was watching you through a small opening, caused by the books not fitting very closely together."

"Oh," said Mr. Hinckle smiling pleasantly, I very well remember the incident now: As I passed in at the office door, I accidentally struck my hand upon the door-case, for while at Summer Mount last night I was sitting with my right hand upon the window-sill in the room assigned me at the little hotel "Crescent," when the window sash suddenly fell down, like a shot, striking upon the back of my hand, a little below the wrist. It caused me much pain at the time; consequently, it gave me more pain in happening to knock it against the door-case. If I said anything of pain I must have been in the act of wiping the perspiration from off my forehead, for I was perspiring freely on reaching the office."

Mr. Hammer said no more; but sat silently gazing out of the window, his vision resting upon some painters at work upon a neighboring church steeple.

Mr. Hinckle after removing his cravat and collar continued his ablutions.

Mr. Hammer still watched with marked interest the men suspended as they were, in thin ether, at a most frightful height.

In a short time, Mr. Hinckle ceased washing, and had passed to the opposite side of the room, where he stood wiping his face and hands; all at once, and in startling accents Mr. Hammer ejaculated:—"Good Heavens! one of those men have fallen. Look! another is clinging to a plank. Something has given way," and without waiting for reply from Mr. Hinckle, he bounded from the room, down the stairs, out into the street, and in the direction of the church.

Mr. Hinckle did not follow, but walked to the front window, which he raised in time to see Mr. Hammer issue from the front doorway, through which he had but such a short time ago entered. Mr. Hinckle shouted to him, saying: "Hammer, what do you mean? We haven't any time to lose. That is no affair of ours. You had better come back."

Mr. Hammer did not stop, but only answered by a wave of his arm, speeding away towards the church. On he ran, while pedestrians stopped and gazed in wonderment at such rapid haste. As he drew nearer the immediate vicinity of the church, others, who were not eye witnesses to the accident, but who were attracted by the shouts of the other workmen, now joined him in his increasing hurry.

On arriving at the church, Mr. Hammer found quite

a crowd had concentrated on the lawn at the side. In breathless haste, pushing men to right and left he went straight to the center. One glance upon the prostrate and quivering form lying on the green sward, and Mr. Hammer fell down upon his knees; and, grasping the unfortunate victim in his arms uttered in breathless agitation and emotion: "My poor father!"

All fully understood, and every heart beat in sympathetic union. The father was yet alive, but unconscious and dreadfully mangled in the fall.

A patrol was called at once, and the injured man, accompanied by his son and others were hurried to the hospital. The report of the accident spread rapidly, so much so, in fact, that even Mrs. McClure who had in her home duties chanced to pass from the kitchen into the dining room, heard the wild cry and commotion in the street; being anxious to learn the cause, she hastened to the front door when she saw a great many running down Cenneth street towards the church. She did not stand there long, when she noticed a man with excited looking countenance advancing diagonally across the street and directly towards her.

He necessarily attracted her attention, because he was the only one whom she could see retreating from

the point, where such marked interest seemed to be centered. He hastened his foot-steps as he drew nearer, and she soon saw that the stranger wished to speak to her, as indicated by his look and uplifted hand before he could pass upon the pavement, upon which a stream of humanity was resistlessly passing; this, made his chances to get through just at that time very doubtful.

In another instant, however, the density of the passing crowd rushing on as do the waters of some mighty torrent, and as heedless as to destination, lessened somewhat. The stranger leaped through and approaching Mrs. McClure asked in a rough but meaning tone: "Is Mr. Hinckle at this house?" "Yes sir," replied the widow. "I would like to see him, if you please," said the man.

The man was quite large, burly, and roughly dressed, his clothes containing sundry spots, giving him an unwelcome appearance; so, Mrs. McClure, without inviting him in, simply stepped to the stairs and called to Mr. Hinckle.

Mr. Hinckle had heard the stranger's request, the front window being up, and was descending the stairs when Mrs. McClure called; passing to the front the stranger said to Mr. Hinckle: "Mr. Hammer requested me to hand this note to you."

He had turned and was going away, when Mr. Hinckle said after reading the line: "Stop a moment."

The man did so, and on being asked whether he knew Mr. Hammer replied: "Yes sir, he is my cousin, and the man who fell from the church steeple is my uncle."

Mr. Hinckle simply nodded, and without interrogating him further, now turned and passed back into the house again, reading the note which had been very nervously written upon a leaf torn from a blank book and ran as follows:

Friend Hinckle:

It was my father who fell.

Hammer.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MUTTERINGS.

THE sympathy on the part of Mr. Hinckle for his friend Mr. Hammer was unbounded. He would have gone immediately to the hospital but time forbade; having just time enough to stop a few minutes at Chief Meryle's office on his way to the depot, where he intended taking a train for Cleveland.

With this object in view he lost no time in getting away from Mrs. McClure's residence. Arriving at the Chief's office, he stated briefly the situation to Chief Meryle, who had great confidence in Mr. Hinckle's abilities. He therefore entrusted all to him, as he had done from the very first.

Mr. Hinckle knew no official friend in Cleveland with whom he could trust so important a matter, so he decided to hurry there at once, with the view of finding out the whereabouts of Claude Nicholas, who was deeply suspected of having committed the dreadful crime; also, who, without doubt, had been instrumental in causing the sudden disappearance of Eva Worthington.



At four o'clock P. M. Mr. Hinckle left the depot at C. on a fast express, due in Cleveland at nine, making only five hours on the road. Mr. Hinckle was tired and took a "recliner" in the hope of receiving some rest; but the terrible mental strain caused by this recent affair, had affected him a great deal more than any previous one; for, whether it was his redoubled activity to discover the criminal who had taken the life of his kind friend, or real sorrow for some *one* whom he could scarcely deem guilty, other than Claude Nicholas, was largely a matter of conjecture; one, that was rapidly assuming definite shape in the mind of Mr. Hammer, who had already noted the change, though small it was, from his ordinary procedure in former cases. In the present case, Mr. Hinckle seemed to tire so easily and his frequent soliloquy was a habit not known to him before.

The train thundered on, making only a few stops. Mr. Hinckle endeavored to invite sleep, for he well knew his weary brain needed rest, or the cords of reason and discretion would snap. It was all in vain, for his thoughts continued to revert back to the exciting incidents of the past few days,—to the very time he entered the hall on the fatal Saturday evening, when he there witnessed that kind, gentle, and honest

creature,—a perfect type of refined womanhood, with her dark eyelashes sweeping down and contrasting richly with the then pale, but soft and well-rounded cheek, and kind dark-brown eyes.

In his deep and sympathetic fancyings, indeed, he could yet see, standing there, that *noble, patient and gentle* girl, whose every word and action from that time on had furrowed deep corrugations of open devotion and avowed sincerity in his zealous exertions to pacify and attenuate the deep emotions of this *beautiful, innocent and loving* girl; for, she was but a child of eighteen summers, and one who had been a stranger to sorrow; but possessed so much of that keen sensibility, so peculiar to her sex, that she was sensitive to the slightest pang of sorrow and grief. There in his vivid, imaginative mind, could he see her *grand and imposing* figure, quivering with honest fear, as she said in tremulous tones: "Oh, Mr. Hinckle, you step into the library, please, I fear——."

The retreating form; the subsequent cry of lamentation, following his words: "Eva! Eva! come quick; your father must be sick;" and the final ejaculation, "I believe he is dead!" were all so distinctly photographed upon his mental vision, that rest and repose came not, as the mighty train rolled on.

These and kindred thoughts engrossed his mind until the train steamed into the station at Cleveland. Mr. Hinckle alighted, and as house No. 22 Lake Avenue was situated near the depot, he repaired to that vicinity immediately, and on foot.

He had been many times in Cleveland, and very well knew the location of the street. When once on Lake Avenue he hastened his footsteps, and it was not long before he arrived in the immediate neighborhood and in actual view of the number mentioned. He stood on the opposite side of the street from house No. 22; and, by reason of his position, together with the brilliant illumination of an electric light, swung over the middle of the street some little distance past the house in question, caused the number 22 to shine forth in silvery distinctness.

Without moving forward, he could readily see that there were no lights to be seen, at least in that portion of the house exposed to his view; so he passed on until he came almost even with the electric light. Still not a light to be seen in the house across the way.

This old-time officer did not reconnoiter further, but as if moved by some sudden impulse, he hastened across the street, mounted the three marble steps and rang the door-bell. A wait, but no response, after the

lapse of the first minute. Another ring, but with the same result. Not the slightest warning of response was seen or heard; and, it was not until after the third ring that Mr. Hinckle passed back to the sidewalk, where he then paused.

Lake Avenue, in that vicinity, was a beautiful street, being built up with magnificent residences of the most modern types. Indeed, in all his quandary, Mr. Hinckle did not fail to observe, as he walked to the pavement, the beautiful and ornamental fronts of the evenly situated residences, as were more prominently revealed by the powerful rays, given off by each successive electric light, as far as eye could see; for the street was straight and spacious.

Few people were to be seen upon it, for the street was located in the quiet, resident portion of the city; however, now and then, a carriage would roll almost noiselessly by, save by the "click" and sometimes even "clatter" of the horses' feet upon the rounded asphalt pavement.

Mr. Hinckle's mind was tired and restless. Others, no doubt, would have gone at once to a lodging house or hotel, to there replenish wasted energies, and fill up the avenues of physical and mental deficiency, until the gray dawning of the morning would bid them

awake, and renew again their labors; but not so; nay, not until he could secure some information concerning house No. 22 and its occupants, did he dare think of relinquishing; so, muttering something to himself, he rapidly walked to the house next door, and situated to the left of No. 22.

He well knew that he would meet with somewhat better success, for while standing on the steps of house No. 22 he had noticed some one pass a side window of the house on the left, with lamp in hand. He was unable to distinguish definitely whether the person was a man or woman; as, his view was somewhat obstructed by the rich and finely woven lace curtains that swept gracefully down before the window. Mr. Hinckle rang the bell, and as he expected, the door was swung open at the first ring.

He was confronted by a lady, whose costly trimmed dress rustled whisperingly, whenever she made the slightest movement.

His courtesy, a very necessary requisite, to one of his profession, had never been at a loss; and indeed, this time, acting under the most reverse mental pressure, it proved far more than equal to the occasion; for, Mr. Hinckle said in his extreme gentleness of tone, with no trace of his former impulsive movements, as if

acting under the most resigned composure: "Please pardon me lady, for this rather late interruption, but having found no one home at the house next door, No. 22, I thought possibly I might, on making inquiry here, find out the whereabouts of Mrs. Tricler."

While Mr. Hinckle was making his business known, the lady viewed him keenly, though with a look of honest reserve, and when he concluded, she said in a soft undertone, as she moved towards an opening to the left: "Mrs. Tricler? Why, I do not know," and as she pushed aside a handsome and neatly reefed portiere, the lower part of which hung carelessly down, hiding from view the interior of a room, she added: "I will inquire."


Mr. Hinckle thought he saw a trace of moisture slowly form upon her lower eye-lids; also, there seemed to be a certain tremor in her voice as she said, "I will inquire."

She was gone but a short time, during which Mr. Hinckle had a better opportunity of studying a large picture which he had chanced to see while talking to the lady; and which was hanging upon the wall of a room, situated directly across from the entrance door where he was now standing, and only separated from the little alcove in front by large folding doors,

which had been left partly open, enough so, indeed, as to reveal the picture.

From this position the view was quite indistinct, for the light from a gas fixture, that hung in the center of the room, shone on it in such a manner, as to render the outlines of the lower part of the face not at all distinguishable. Mr. Hinckle stood thus earnestly meditating upon the picture, for there indeed seemed to be some remarkable feature about it that challenged his attention, even at the distance from where he was standing. He thought very surely that he had seen the original, and his power of recognition along the line of identification, was indeed remarkable; being absolutely correct in detecting the slightest differences.

Just as he had shifted his position by stepping a little to the right, in order to get a better view of the entire face of the picture, he heard a voice issuing from the room in which the lady had entered. This arrested his attention. It was a voice, too, that seemed very familiar, though whose he could not at that time readily determine. Notwithstanding he had only overheard the two words, "one moment," they were audible enough, and seemed to be pronounced somewhat at variance with the natural, as if said in fear, or upon sudden awakening from a dream. Mr. Hinckle felt



certain that he had heard the voice before, but just when or where, he could not then recall.

Immediately after hearing the words, as if said on the eve of departure, the lady appeared and said: "Why, Mrs. Tricler left this morning, stating that she was going to Cincinnati, and we do not know when she will return."

"To Cincinnati! well, indeed," remarked Mr. Hinckle. After a little he added: "Then you do not know where she is stopping in Cincinnati?"

"No, sir, we do not."

There now followed a short pause, Mr. Hinckle realizing that any further questioning concerning Mrs. Tricler's doings, and the line of courtesy, as emanating from a stranger, would be broken; so, he was profuse in his appreciation for the kindness, as he made haste to take his departure.

Mr. Hinckle walked back past house No. 22, never slackening his speed, save when he was passing in front of the alley, which ran between house No. 22 and the next one adjoining and to the right.

As he passed the alley he was startled beyond surprise at seeing a side shutter of one of the back rooms in Mrs. Tricler's residence thrown partly open; enough so, as to reveal a little streak of light shining through



between the shutter and the brick wall. A moment later, and without lessening his gait, he chanced to look back at the house at which he had just made inquiry. As he did so, he instantly became conscious of some one standing at the window, by which he had seen a person pass with light in hand, while standing upon the front steps of House No. 22.

The situation flitted through his mind with electrical rapidity; for, he instinctively concluded that he had been deceived; also, that his coming had been anticipated, and his own movements were being closely watched.

He did not stop at house No. 22 but passed on. The alley was long, dark and narrow, as indicated by the next beautifully lighted street, looming up at the end of this intervening, tunnel like darkness. All this Mr. Hinckle discerned at a glance, and without stopping.

Passing on to the next corner, he betook himself over a cross street leading towards a prominent Cleveland hotel, his usual stopping place while in Cleveland. Just as he turned the corner a clock on some public building near by began striking off the hour of ten. The hotel was some distance away, being situated in the business portion of the city.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are times when

great provocation demands immediate action, nevertheless, it must be deferred, in order that nature lend her assistance in the successful completion; so, Mr. Hinckle now thought it high time to seek rest before being found wandering the streets, a muttering and demented wreck; for, having tossed about in ceaseless excitement for nearly a week past, without sleep or rest, with no thought but of the horrible deed, the bereft wife, and above all, the situation of that *grieving, innocent* daughter, continually rising and forming a mysterious, impenetrable gloom before him, it seemed that his very brain would chill without some relaxation. His body ached in every joint. Oh, if only to sleep, if but for an hour, what relief! To forget for just a little while the world, with all its sadness and deception! But then again, what miserable failure was the result of this attempt at the little hotel "Crescent." Would it be repeated in this far away lake city? Ah, no; for the weary brain had now almost reached the point of sheer exhaustion, and the nocturnal visitor, "sleep," would soon claim it as her own.

On he traveled, as if recruited by the last reinforcements of Nature's stored up energies, draining them to the very dregs.

After making many turns, sometimes finding him-

self on streets where wealth and luxury met his every glance, then again passing through thoroughfares where poverty, lowliness and distress were depicted and mutely told by the dark and poorly kept tenement houses.

Mr. Hinckle finally reached the hotel, and was soon in a room all alone. On entering, he immediately appropriated to himself the luxuries of a handsome rocker, that was situated very near the door on entering. After the porter had closed the door leading into Mr. Hinckle's room, and was doggedly passing through the hall towards the elevator, Mr. Hinckle leaned back in the chair, and for the first time moaned; for, it was then, in his extreme weariness and reduced physical state that he longed most sincerely for his true and trusted old friend "Hammer," from whom Fate had so unexpectedly severed his connection.

The bed was in perfect readiness, but once in the chair, and after muttering a few semi-somnalistic words, he soon fell into a weary slumber. Two hours afterwards there came a gentle knock at the door, closely followed by a low, familiar call of,—“Oh Hinckle!” breathed through the keyhole; but it was as if speaking to a vacant room, so far as a response was concerned, for his words were only answered by the

heavy and ever fitful breathing of the one within. The visitor stood with ear inclined to the key-hole for a short time, when the breathing suddenly becomes inaudible; but no movement is heard on the part of the occupant, so the low word is again spoken. This time, and after a slight pause, comes the answer in broken mutterings, as if issuing from the lips of a drunken man, and indifferent as to what he is saying.

The muttering came in a very low and indistinct tone, scarcely above a whisper; so slight, indeed, that it was with much difficulty that the listener could, now and then, make out to understand a word spoken a little louder than the ordinary tone. Still, he listened and the muttering goes on, being somewhat disconnected at certain intervals by a repetition of the former labored and irregular breathing.

The person beseeching admittance now thinks that, possibly, he may have been misdirected as to the room; so he quietly withdraws and passes back to the proper authorities for more accurate information, only to be told positively that the room had been assigned to Mr. Hinckle, and to him alone. He goes back again determined not to delay matters, as he suddenly recalls a few words spoken by Mr. Hinckle in the law office of Claude Nicholas (for the caller was none other than

Mr. Hammer), that had no connection with the accidental striking of the hand against the door-case, and, which Mr. Hinckle endeavored to so adroitly explain, as a reason for his soliloquy.

It will be remembered that Mr. Hammer did not make answer to the explanation offered by Mr. Hinckle at Mrs. McClure's boarding house concerning his soliloquy. Neither did he make him aware of the fact that he had overheard other startling remarks made at the same time while in the law office, and before he had made his presence known to Mr. Hinckle, that were absolutely foreign to Mr. Hinckle's explanation. Instead he thought gravely, carefully refraining from any questioning, lest it might lead to some unnecessary worry; for, he well knew that the case was rapidly reaching an intricate state of complication: so, he merely drew his chair nearer the window and wonderingly gazed out only to witness his own father fall from the church steeple.

The father was found to have sustained quite a number of ugly surface wounds, but no immediate danger concerning his recovery was entertained by the hospital physicians; so Mr. Hammer had left the depot at C.—on the next regular train following the one on which Mr. Hinckle came; this, accounts for his

so opportune arrival. Notwithstanding the fact that he knew that Mr. Hinckle had been accustomed, though but recently, to indulge in this self talking, during his wakeful hours, he had no knowledge, however, that he had incurred the habit of muttering in his sleep.

Mr. Hammer passed back to the door of the room in which he thought he would find Mr. Hinckle. This time and without knocking, he turned the door-knob, only to discover that the door was not locked.

He entered the room and to his thrilling astonishment, he made the startling discovery that the person whom he had heard muttering, but a few minutes before, whether Mr. Hinckle or not, was nowhere to be found.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### IN HOUSE NO. 22.

It was nearing the silent hour of midnight when Mr. Hammer passed below, and to the main office for more definite information, that Mr. Hinckle suddenly awoke, as if hastened by the dying echoes of his friend's familiar call, and the kindly knock at the door.

On waking he immediately sprung to his feet, and with renewed strength passed from the hotel, unobserved through a side corridor: wholly unconscious that Mr. Hammer, whom he thought miles away, had actually been at his door, entreating admittance only to be driven away in doubt and uncertainty concerning the real identity of the sleeping, muttering one within.

His sleep, although disturbed by mumbling, fanciful dreams, had rested his tired brains and calmed his aching body: to the extent that, he was again ready to renew with vigor his investigations. Both the light streaming through at the shutter, and the form at the window were fresh in his memory.

There were also three other facts now claiming his

attention. (1). The picture that he had chanced to see while awaiting the lady's return at the house next door to No. 22, was still vividly presenting itself in mental vision as he hurried on. (2). The voice overheard just before the lady's return seemed yet to resound in his ears. (3). The tear that had slowly formed, apparently caused by his inquiry, and followed by the turning away, as if to hide it, was enough to elicit some surprise. This, however, Mr. Hinckle thought may have been caused by some domestic grief or sorrow unknown to him, although the longer he reflected upon it, the more it became apparent to him that his inquiry in regard to the whereabouts of Mrs. Tricler, was, indeed, the direct and immediate cause of the emotion; for, not until mentioning the name, did he observe any emotional excitement. He therefore, very naturally concluded that his inquiry had something to do with it.

All these things, together with the disappearance of Eva Worthington and Claude Nicholas, were uppermost in his mind as he again rapidly proceeded onward toward Mrs. Tricler's residence. On reaching the vicinity he entered the narrow, dark alley from the opposite end and farthest away from the Tricler home. Creeping noiselessly on he watched in vain to see the light,



as it had shone through from the opposite side when walking upon the street.

All was now shrouded in darkness in this narrow passage, save at the ends of the alley where the light from the street shone in a short distance only to be cut off by the next building, cornering upon the alley.

Mr. Hinckle stole softly along until he had reached a point directly below the window through which he had seen the light when on his way to the hotel. Being so near the end of the alley, the light from the street enabled him to see the faint outlines of the shutter, still standing partly open, but the window now revealed no light.

He stood there a short time contemplating upon the risks of entering, while a death-like stillness hovered about the place, and he could hear with distinctness the beating of his own heart. No sound was to be heard within, except the rapid ticking of what he thought was a small alarm clock.

With bold, resolute decision, Mr. Hinckle now concluded to enter ; feeling sure of gaining some important clue : and, if brought face to face with Claude Nichloas, to then and there arrest him for the murder of attorney Worthington.

Entering houses clandestinely, and at this unseemingly

hour was not at all consistent with his usual method, but his individuality and personal determination were traits that had reached such a remarkable degree of prominence in the actions and decisions of Mr. Hinckle, that once forming a conclusion it became as immutable as adamant; so all his work was done with the same mathematical precision.

He at once began to devise a means of entrance. Happening to glance along the side of the house and toward the street (for he thought he heard footsteps approaching), he observed an iron grating situated alongside the house, a few feet from where he was standing. It was partly exposed, by the light shining in from the street. Passing to it he soon found that it could easily be lifted. He did so, and it proved to be a chute. Mr. Hinckle descended, and, on striking a match, he found himself in a large cellar: before the match had burned away he noticed a stairway leading up from the opposite side of the cellar. He advanced toward it and on lighting another match, then pushed upward on a door at the top of the stairway. Mr. Hinckle found no difficulty in raising the door, as it had been left unlocked. While the second match was still burning, he had reached the head of the stairway, and found himself in a comfortably furnished room.

This room, he concluded to be situated directly under the one in which he had seen the light. Mr. Hinckle was amply prepared for any emergency, being a true shot and absolutely fearless of danger: so striking another match, he passed up another stairway, which he soon found, led to two rooms on the second floor, the doors of which were standing wide open. The one to the right, he found to be a bed room, and the other situated to the left, was as he expected, the one in which he had seen the light, for on lighting another match, he could see, through the window, the shutter thrown partly open.

The bed in the room to the right was not occupied, so he crept into the other room. In the center was situated a quaint, old-fashioned table upon which a lamp had been placed. Advancing nearer, he saw upon it some papers, scattered about in profusion. With another match he lit the lamp, and after drawing a ferocious looking pistol from his hip-pocket, and laying it on the table, he at once began investigating the papers.

He picked up first, two envelopes, one of which he found to be addressed to Mrs. Mary Tricler and the other, to Mr. Claude Nicholas. He read their contents carefully and without examining the few mis-

cellaneous scraps, took up the lamp, and with unguarded step passed back to the cellar. He here extinguished the light, leaving the lamp, in the cellar, and passed from the chute and into the alley.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE PICTURE, THE TEAR, THE VOICE.

WITH a calmness and composure in true keeping with all that characterizes successful exertion and genuine business operations, Mr. Hinckle passed from the alley; he possessed knowledge, which he well knew was of vital importance to himself and others then connected with the case.


Like the serenity and usual mildness that follows a storm, Mr. Hinckle now went forth cool and collected. What could possibly be in those two letters that would cause such a marked and sudden change? It seemed, indeed, as if the light of discovery was slowly revealing all, by shining over the horizon encircling mystery and darkness. It was now after midnight, so he had very little time to lose, in order to board the next train to C——, yet he had an insatiable desire to know the real identity of the picture; also, whose voice he had heard, and the cause of the tears and the apparently suppressed emotion on the part of the lady next door to house No. 22.

To Mr. Hinckle, it seemed very plausible that the occupants of the house at which he had made inquiry, were certainly conversant with some of the facts bordering upon the case; and that they also very likely knew that young Nicholas was deeply suspected of having committed the crime; hence, the cause of the grief: but then, again, was all that silent sorrow, coming from a mere neighbor out of friendly sympathy? Or was it real and piercing, as from a relative? What close connection had these people with Mrs. Tricler, that would warrant any such mute sadness at the mere mentioning of a name? Certainly, there must be some cause for this. These, and other conclusions began to wrangle in the mind of Mr. Hinckle; so robed in full power to act as an officer of justice, and with a little extra time at his disposal, Mr. Hinckle concluded again to ring the door bell, and not enter as he did at house No. 22.

Never in all his work was his mind more brilliant; his actions more deliberate; his purpose more clearly defined; so, with all the dignity of a summer sun, slowly rising over the crest of some Alpine mountain peak, shedding its glorious rays through the pure, crisp, morning atmosphere, did Mr. Hinckle pass house No. 22, toward the house at which he had made inquiry.

Just before ringing the door bell, Mr. Hinckle thought he heard some one approaching. Stepping back to the side walk, he saw, indeed, that some person was coming towards him. He could not get a good view, as the person approaching was proceeding along the side-walk on the same side of the street about midway between a point opposite the street lights. As this was the only person to be seen, Mr. Hinckle thought it was merely the night watchman patrolling his beat; but, as he passed by the next street light, Mr. Hinckle perceived him to be a man dressed in citizen's clothes; a moment later he was amazed beyond description to see his old friend "Hammer" approaching.

Mr. Hinckle started on a run to meet him, and the next instant there followed a warm exchange of greeting, though in guarded tone. Mr. Hinckle then told his friend to follow, so walking back to the house he rang the bell. They were compelled to ring again, before meeting with a response. Of course, this was expected owing to the time of night. The second ring was answered after some delay, by the appearance of a young lady whom Mr. Hinckle afterwards found to be a domestic. He informed her that he had come to speak to a lady with whom he had held some conversation in the early part of the evening.



Seeing that the girl was about to offer some objection, he interposed by stating that an interview with the lady was absolutely necessary, regardless to the lateness of the hour ; also, equivocation or parley would not be accepted for a moment, as they were officers of the law :—

On hearing these emphatic demands the girl tremblingly questioned as to what lady they referred. At this Mr. Hinckle went on at some length, describing the lady in question, until he was interrupted by the girl who very kindly stated that it was unnecessary for him to proceed further, as the lady was not present.

"When did she go away?" asked Mr. Hinckle.

"She left Cleveland on the eleven o'clock train," answered the girl.

"Did anyone accompany her?"

"Yes sir."

"Who?"

"A young lady."

"What is her name, please?"

"I believe they call her Eva, yes Eva, but I cannot recall the last name."

"Is the name Eva Worthington?" asked Mr. Hinckle.



"Oh yes, that is it, Eva Worthington."

All this time Mr. Hammer stood silently by, and just as the girl had finished answering the last question, Mr. Hinckle began to reel, but was caught in the strong grasp of Mr. Hammer, as the girl gave a low cry of fear.

Mr. Hammer now became the hero of the hour, and although startled a trifle, he proved equal to the emergency. While the girl stood by in dumb amazement, Mr. Hammer took the proper steps to restore a person whom he discovered had only fainted. In a few minutes Mr. Hammer perceived signs of returning consciousness.

"Eva. Eva! darling Eva!" were the words that fell from his lips just as he was recovering. The next moment he rose and looked around in weird astonishment, not seeming to realize what had happened. Not a word was then spoken of it, but Mr. Hinckle totteringly advanced towards the girl, and kindly asked permission to see a certain picture, indicating its whereabouts by pointing out the room in which it was hanging. The girl, at once, acquiesced, and leading the way, she quickly slid open the large folding doors previously mentioned.

Mr. Hinckle stepped in, and taking hold of Mr.

Hammer's arm, gently led him across the room, when he pointed to the picture. Not a word was uttered, but Mr. Hammer slowly nodded his head. Mr. Hinckle then turned toward the girl who stood near the door and said:

"How comes Miss Worthington's picture to be here?"

She answered:

"Miss Worthington's aunt, Mrs. Kiplin, lives here; and, I am told Miss Worthington often visits her."

"Ah, I see," said Mr. Hinckle; then after thanking the young lady who had been so frank and open in her replies, they both left, and proceeded towards the depot, where they intended boarding a train for C—.

Although feeling great signs of returning exhaustion, Mr. Hinckle made heroic efforts not to betray it to his friend, being no doubt, greatly chagrined at what had just happened. On the way to the train, he gave Mr. Hammer definite orders to arrest Mrs. Tricler as an accomplice with Claude Nicholas in the murder of attorney Worthington. He also stated that he would look after Claude Nicholas. Mr. Hinckle then related all in detail to Mr. Hammer from the time they separated at Mrs. McClure's boarding house.

At any rate enough evidence had been obtained to

warrant the immediate arrest of Mrs. Tricler ; provided, she could be found, and as to Claude Nicholas, he had not the slightest chance of escaping arrest, as the real murderer, if his whereabouts could be ascertained : so far he had adroitly eluded them.

The only thing remaining to be done, was to arrest these two suspected criminals, for the blaze of public excitement was beginning to show above the smouldering conditions of the past week.

On the way from Cleveland to C——, Mr. Hinckle obtained little or no rest for only once did Mr. Hammer observe him to be asleep, and then, for only a very short time. It was not that profound, invigorating sleep, as was evident from the ever recurring mutterings, together with extreme restlessness of body.

He awoke very suddenly and seemed to be cognizant of his habit, for on awaking, he immediately interrogated Mr. Hammer as to whether he had been talking in his sleep : he was quite serious and it seemed to trouble him a great deal, for if it be true, he knew it to be a habit of recent formation. To this, Mr. Hammer answered rather evasively, being inclined to jest about the matter. It was quite evident however, that Mr. Hinckle thought he had been talking aloud in his sleep, for it was apparently with a considerable degree

of reluctance that he even closed his eyes during the rest of the way, rather preferring to appear more talkative than usual.

At six o'clock A. M. the train arrived at C—— and both well understood what they were to do. Mr. Hinckle had instructed Mr. Hammer where to find Mrs. Tricler, having gleaned such information from one of the letters found on the table in her Cleveland home, the full contents of which will be given in another chapter. As to Claude Nicholas, it was Mr. Hinckle's business and purpose to discover his whereabouts, and that as soon as possible.

After leaving the depot at C——, they went directly to chief Meryle's office laying the facts and the result of their investigations before him. The chief then ordered the arrest of Claude Nicholas and Mrs. Tricler.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ARRESTED.

AFTER leaving the chief's office these two men who had so often successfully worked in such harmonious conjunction, now separated; Mr. Hammer going to Mrs. McClure's boarding house, and Mr. Hinckle to the law office of Claude Nicholas.

We will follow first the steps taken by Mr. Hammer. On arriving at the boarding house, and being properly admitted by Mrs. McClure herself, he kindly requested a few moments' conversation with her concerning a certain lady to whom she had but recently rented a room.

The request was at once granted for Mrs. McClure well knew of the position and importance of the one addressing her; so, opening a side door leading from the hall in which they were standing, she kindly invited him into a room, the atmosphere of which was fragrant by reason of a large bunch of flowers, that had been placed into a glass vase, filled with water and placed upon a stand.

Mr. Hammer then said :

"Mrs. McClure, you have a roomer here by the name of Mrs. Tricler."

"Yes sir," replied Mrs. McClure with a look of surprise.

"When did she first apply here for lodging?"

"Last Thursday morning."

"Is she in your house at present?"

"Yes sir, I think she is in her room, at least, I have not seen her pass out this morning."

"Well Mrs. McClure, I am very sorry to state that I have a warrant for her arrest, and it is quite unfortunate that she should be found at your home, however, give yourself no uneasiness as to that."

This information came to Mrs. McClure in the nature of a thunderbolt. Her answer came in a few ejaculations of surprise, Mr. Hammer then asked her what she knew concerning Mrs. Tricler ; as to whether she had ever been at her house before, and a few other questions of minor importance.

Mrs. McClure was unable to impart any information, as Mrs. Tricler had only been in her house a short time, during which she had been very reserved, preferring to keep to her room, except on one occasion, when she was known to have been gone nearly half a day.

Just as Mr. Hammer was about to ask Mrs. McClure to invite the strange lady in, he heard a rustling sound in the hall, and the next moment a woman passed the door. Mrs. McClure then told him that she was the lady to whom he referred.

At this, Mr. Hammer withdrew from the room, and overtaking the lady at the front door, at once placed her under arrest, as an accomplice of Claude Nicholas for the murder of attorney Worthington.

This, of course, created a very sensational scene; one that we will not attempt to describe, but immediately proceed to trace the actions of Mr. Hinckle.

Before going further, it is important to acquaint the reader with the contents of the two letters of such prime importance, found lying on the table in Mrs. Tricler's house. They ran as follows:—

(1)

Claude Nicholas,  
Att'y at Law,  
S. E. Cor. Fifth and Hammond Sts.,  
C——, Ohio.

Aug. 18, '98.

My Dear Aunt:

Miss Eva Worthington's father has been cruelly murdered. As soon as I read of the sad affair in this morn-

ing's paper, I hastened out to offer my condolence to the bereaved family, but I am sorry to state that I was rather rudely repulsed, by a man whom I learned to be a detective. Owing to my relations with Miss Eva, and the way in which I was treated, I apprehend some fear, lest I be placed under arrest. I denounce this man as a scoundrel; with some deep purpose in view. I have found out that he rooms at No. 54 Cenneth St., you had better come to C—— on the next train after receiving this letter.

Your nephew,

Claude Nicholas.

P. S. I see by the paper his name is Hinckle.

(2)

C——, Ohio,

August 20, 1898.

My dear Nephew:—

I have succeeded in renting a room at 54 Cenneth St. One that is situated adjacent to the one in which Mr. Hinckle rooms. This afternoon he came in accompanied by a man of stalwart appearance. Shortly after they entered, there seemed to be some commotion going on out on the street, and the one who came in with Mr. Hinckle, rushed to the street to learn the cause



of the disturbance; leaving Mr. Hinckle all alone in his room.

Nearly all the time he was alone, he indulged in talking and muttering to himself, while pacing to and fro upon the floor. I listened for his door happened not to be entirely closed. I will tell you of the words and broken expressions which I overheard, when you return. I am going to the Worthington home this morning and will tell all to Eva and Mrs. Worthington.

Lovingly,  
Your Aunt,  
Mary Tricler.

Mr. Hinckle was at a loss to know of the whereabouts of Claude Nicholas. The chief, seeing that Mr. Hinckle was almost wholly tired out, ordered a carriage and called in two other officers to accompany him. Under Mr. Hinckle's orders, they were driven directly to the building containing the law office of Claude Nicholas. The three officers alighted, passed up the steps, and into the office, where they found Mr. Nicholas engaged in writing.

Mr. Hinckle, at once, placed him under arrest. Mr. Nicholas showed not the least sign of fear or excite-

ment, but willingly accompanied the three officers. They were driven back to the chief's office, after which Claude Nicholas was incarcerated in the county jail, some little time, even, before Mr. Hammer arrived in charge of Mrs. Tricler.

Mr. Hinckle next went out to Dr. Druid's house. Arriving there, he found Mrs. Worthington sitting in one of the doctor's easy chairs. He told her that the one who had committed the deed, he had placed under arrest. After a few kind words of encouragement, Mr. Hinckle expressed a desire to see Miss Worthington, whom he knew had left Cleveland a few hours in advance of him. He was told that she was home. He went to the Worthington home, at once, where he held quite an extended talk with her. After this, he left and instead of going to his room at No. 54 Cenneth St., went to the home of a relative, residing somewhere in the outskirts of the city. There, he had concluded to spend a short vacation.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE INNOCENT—THE GUILTY.

When the hurly burly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

MACBETH.

WHEN Mr. Hinckle withdrew from the presence of Eva Worthington, there were depicted on every lineament of his countenance, traces of the deepest anguish and despair. So concentrated was his thoughts, and so bitter and intense were the throes of mental confusion, that he failed, as he mutteringly passed by, to even notice Dennis, the coachman, who at that time was mowing the beautiful front lawn adjacent to the winding drive leading up to the veranda.

Dennis stopped and carefully noted his changed appearance, and after Mr. Hinckle had stepped into the carriage which had been held in waiting, he at once sought out Miss Worthington in order to learn the cause of this sudden change; for, as has been intimated Dennis, from the first, had been very quick to lend any assistance that would lead to the discovery of the

perpetrator of the crime, much less, to satisfy his own hankering curiosity.

Ceasing his work, he walked to the front door, and without previously announcing himself, entered and found Miss Worthington in the reception room. Passing in, he at once secured an audience with her. He said: "Miss Worthington, what in the world, has happened to Mr. Hinckle? Has he not yet found the guilty one?"

Wringing and throwing wild her hands in the most piercing distress, she said, as she turned and walked toward the parlor: "Oh yes, he has found one, but——;" here words failed her, as she passed on into the parlor.

Dennis Hubert gazed in blank wonderment; then his own brave heart was moved to pity, and he too, turned away weeping like a child. What bad news had Mr. Hinckle brought to cause this fresh gush of emotion. Dennis could not understand it; and, although used to roughing it, and fully accustomed from early youth, to all that tends to harden one's nature, yet was he sensitive enough to respect the feelings of this charming young lady, by ceasing his remarks and questions, and quietly quitting the room.

It will be remembered that the letter that Mr.

Nicholas mailed in the P. O. at C——, and addressed to Eva Worthington, was what took Mr. Hinckle, following closely after Mr. Hammer, to the quiet little country resort of Summer Mount; only, however, to be nonplussed at not finding either Claude Nicholas or Eva Worthington.

Vague suspicions then began to pervade the mind of Mr. Hinckle, lest he had been purposely deceived.—These were next followed by uncertain fancies and hallucinations, leading up to mental disturbances, cropping out in unconscious mutterings, first discovered by Mr. Hammer, his friend and associate.

The note found on the foot of the bed giving positive proof that Eva had gone, but only for a short time; also, the finding of the letter written to Miss Shaler while Eva was in Cleveland, put a new phase upon matters. It was not, however, until Mr. Hammer had handed him the letter in Claude Nicholas' law office, that Mr. Hinckle knew positively that Mr. Nicholas ever lived in Cleveland; hence, associating Eva's letter written to Miss Shaler, telling her of a certain drive with one Mr. Nicholas, and the one given him by Mr. Hammer, it at once became evident that, possibly, the missing couple might have gone to Cleveland.

That the Mr. Nicholas referred to in Eva's letter to

Miss Shaler, and her congratulatory letter, to Claude Nicholas represented one and the same person, was now beyond question.

This then accounts for Mr. Hinckle's decisive action, on departing from the law office, and commanding Mr. Hammer to follow. Mr. Hinckle had decided to go to Cleveland; so, to this end, he hastened to his room, gives a few kindly orders to Mrs. McClure; procures some necessary articles, and after having been known to soliloquize, being overheard by Mrs. Tricler, he leaves unaccompanied by his friend, Mr. Hammer, whom he intended taking with him.

Whether Mr. Hinckle was induced to take this trip for the purpose of intercepting what may have seemed to him an eloping couple, or merely for the capture and arrest of Claude Nicholas, is left for the reader to imagine as we approach the end.

\* \* \* \* \*

The steps taken by Mr. Hinckle after his arrival in Cleveland, and indeed, up to the last private interview with Eva Worthington are unnecessary to recount. So matters rested for the next two weeks.

Mr. Hinckle and his friend, had finished their work in the great case,

It was now the duty of the law to either convict or acquit these two, now being held; one, for the murder of the noted district attorney, and the other, as an accomplice in the crime.

The case would not come up for a month or more. Public clamor had greatly subsided, and affairs were gradually settling back to their normal conditions.


\* \* \* \* \*

Two weeks had already elapsed, since Mr. Hinckle had gone to the home of his relative, preferring to spend his vacation in seclusion. Indeed, Mr. Hinckle's whereabouts were only known to a few, including chief Meryle, and his old friend, Mr. Hammer.

Mrs. Worthington was slowly improving, and she, with Eva was now at home.

The two suspected criminals were held as the guilty parties in the crime.

Ever since the visit of Mrs. Tricler to the Worthington home, there had been a noted change in the actions of both Mrs. Worthington and her daughter Eva. This was even detected by Dennis, as has already been related, upon the withdrawal of Mr. Hinckle from the Worthington home. Evidently, something was known to Mrs. Worthington and Eva that seemed to give new color to the mystery.



Mrs. Worthington, no doubt, had by this time told Eva all, concerning what the attorney had said in the library on the evening of the tragedy in regard to the advances and overtures of Mr. Nicholas.

This then, must account for the silence of Eva, in protesting the innocence of Claude Nicholas. The silence, however, is not destined to live long; for it is suddenly broken, after the visit of Mrs. Tricler.

What was previously deep morning and regret, suddenly turned to fitful anguish, mingled with rage and shame. She could stand this suspense no longer; so, going to the little country store, she called by telephone, chief Meryle for the purpose of ascertaining the whereabouts of Mr. Hinckle. The chief at once, made answer that Mr. Hinckle was so ill that no one, except his relatives, was admitted to see him; further adding, that his *death was expected hourly*.

At this, Eva blanched to a marble-like paleness, as she withdrew from the little store: stepping into the carriage, she ordered Dennis to hurry back home.

Once there, she commanded the coachman to remain in waiting at the door, as she would return in a very short time. She entered and after a little consultation with Mrs. Worthington, Eva came out again and entered the carriage, giving orders to drive with all possible speed to Lawrence Station.



Dennis was not at all slow in responding, as he was always delighted to test the speed of the grand team, whose step and carriage always commanded attention.


Arriving at Lawrence station, she boarded a street car and in about twenty minutes afterwards alighted near chief Meryle's office. This brilliant, charming, and affectionate daughter, with white lips and livid countenance, now entered chief Meryle's office, and upon approaching him beseechingly said: "Please tell me where I may find Mr. Hinckle."

The chief greatly surprised, glanced up, and after keenly surveying the young lady, repeated what he had said by telephone.

Dropping on her knees in front of him, she begged pittingly of him to tell.

The chief, up to this time, did not know who it was, addressing him so fervently. Being told by Eva herself, and considering the importance of the case, he at once, through courtesy to the lady, ordered a carriage. He also telephoned Mr. Hammer, who arrived in ten minutes. The chief then ordered Mr. Hammer to accompany Miss Worthington, and the two entered the carriage. They were very rapidly driven to the home of Mr. Hinckle's relative.

During the ride Miss Worthington, without a tremor



in her voice, acquainted Mr. Hammer with facts that caused the cold chills to creep over his body, and an uncertain sadness to look out from his eyes.

One more turn and they were there. Mr. Hammer who had been a frequent caller for the past week, was well known to the members of the household. He therefore lost no time in formally introducing Miss Worthington; after this he kindly asked, in her behalf, if she could be allowed to see Mr. Hinckle for a very short time.

The doctor had forbidden any unnecessary intrusion, but the request coming from Mr. Hammer, was, at once, honored; so he advanced and gently opened the door leading into the room, where he well knew his friend lay sick with a raging fever.

Through civility, Mr. Hammer had only opened the door, not intending to enter. Eva, although flushed with excitement, sorrow, rage, and fear, bade him enter. He did so, leading the way.

Mr. Hinckle was lying on a large couch, situated near the center of the room. They found him asleep, and after Mr. Hammer had escorted Miss Worthington to a chair, he advanced to the head of the couch, and sorrowfully gazed upon the sleeping countenance of his old comrade, while tears slowly sprung to his eyes.

Eva sat with her head leaning upon the arm of the chair. It was indeed a stirring scene; such, that no artist could justly paint, for the ever changing face of the sleeper, depicting sorrow, pain, and mystery; the trembling fever-swollen lips and the restless hands, would have made it impossible.

Finally, Mr. Hammer gently laid his hand on the forehead of his friend, and as if actuated by some supernatural power, the sleeper mutters:—"Eva! Eva! why did I——?" Then after a moment's pause he added: "*What victory has love?*" Another pause, then came the words: "*I must tell—I must tell——.*"

There were other words muttered that elicited the attention of both. Mr. Hammer had moved forward, and dropping down on one knee, now had hold of the left hand of Mr. Hinckle.

It was not long after this somniloquy, however, that Mr. Hinckle awoke, and on glancing into the face of his friend, said calmly though with a look of intense pain: "*Please send for Eva Worthington, for I fear that my time is short.*"

Mr. Hinckle turned to Eva, who tremblingly approached the couch. Mr. Hinckle's eyes wandered for a moment, when on seeing her he said: "*Oh Eva, why did you come here?*"

To this question, and without betraying any signs of emotion, Eva said: "*Oh, Mr. Hinckle! what mean all those mutterings? Oh! speak and save Mr. Nicholas.*"


At these words, Mr. Hinckle, as if summoning up all his strength in one last effort to clear the innocent, as he had always done before, now rose on his couch and said in a sorrowful, dying tone, as all the members of the household gathered around:—"*Eva, I killed your father. I killed your father. Oh, Eva! dear one.*"

Then sinking back on the couch and feebly pointing to Mr. Hammer, he added in language scarcely above a murmur: "*Oh, Eva! I have told him all. I am dying! I am dying!*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Not many hours previous Mr. Hinckle had made a full confession to Mr. Hammer, who had been with him almost constantly since his illness began. The doctor had told Mr. Hammer even after Mr. Hinckle's confession that the sick man would have but a few hours yet to live; hence, Mr. Hammer chose to remain silent. In his confession he detailed to Mr. Hammer how, in his mad act of haste and jealousy, he had hoped to prove the crime on Claude Nicholas: that

he thought that by so doing he would win the affections of Eva Worthington with whom he was desperately in love. He also told Mr. Hammer, that he had closely watched the movements of Claude Nicholas for a year past, and fearing Eva would marry him, he had written the letter to attorney Worthington, coming presumably from Claude Nicholas: that he knew of the attorney's feeling toward Mr. Nicholas, and having consummated all his plans, he then and there committed the deed, the opportunity being highly favorable. He related how he had written up the bogus will paper, imitating to a nicety the handwriting of Mr. Worthington; how he had placed it on the writing desk just after committing the crime; also, that he had been to the city office of the attorney on the very day of the crime; and while there, Mr. Worthington had handed him the pistol for the purpose of leaving at a certain store for repair. This was done, only to be turned against the attorney the same evening; that in case of failure to convict Claude Nicholas, suicide would probably be the verdict; thereby, casting out all suspicions regarding himself. The heel track and indentations found on the window sill, also the small particles of earth and clay, were all placed there by Mr. Hinckle, the size of the track corresponding to a shoe worn by Claude Nicholas.



In short the purpose for every act was explained in detail, but, "A guilty conscience needs no accuser;" for his unconscious *mutterings* had told all.

Eva's hurried trip to Cleveland, stealing away in the night to the station Lawrence, at the earnest appeal of Claude Nicholas, for the purpose of proving his innocence, was all brought out after Mr. Hinckle's death: also, that Mr. Nicholas had written another letter after mailing the one at the government building, which he mailed on the train, and which told, he had decided to go to Cleveland instead of Summer Mount. This last letter, the detective failed to get; but Mr. Hinckle's trip to Cleveland, as will be remembered was made by reason of other letters happening to fall into his possession; for he had never known that either Claude Nicholas or Eva Worthington had relatives living in Cleveland.

Mrs. Tricler, who had played the part of a detective, herself, had accomplished her work in overhearing the criminating *mutterings* of Mr. Hinckle at Mrs. McClure's boarding house, and informing Eva and Mrs. Worthington of the same. Her purpose in taking a room there was to obtain some clue, that would exonerate her nephew, whom she firmly believed to be innocent of any such crime; for, she had reared and

taught him from infancy, having been left an orphan when a mere infant. This was all accomplished previous to her arrest.

The stranger whom Mrs. Worthington had seen to act so queerly, was only a client engaged in a suit, as Eva had suspected.

Mr. Hammer also related, that when Eva was playing the piano, Mr. Hinckle had told him how he had noiselessly crept in and performed the awful deed, escaping by way of the window, coolly taking time to then and there form the indentations on the window sill by a duplicate pair of shoes that he had seen Claude Nicholas purchase, and which he was himself wearing at the time. His confession, as graphically described by Mr. Hammer, produced a shock, from which the entire force and community at large did not soon recover; for his unimpeachable standing had always been recognized.

It is also obvious that Mr. Hinckle in this affair, always contrived to perform his work in the presence of some one; hoping thereby, to eliminate all suspicion, regarding himself; but it was during his unguarded moments, when overtaxed nature failed him, that he gave rise to *mutterings* both while awake and asleep, that led to the final suspicion. There was one excep-

tion to this however. This was when he became alarmed at Eva's disappearance, and hastened to Summer Mount, regardless of the fact that Mr. Hammer had preceded him: then, subsequently to Cleveland, for the purpose of preventing a secret marriage; for, in his jealousy he thought they had gone thither with that intent: he hoped to prevent this, by arresting Mr. Nicholas.

It was also ascertained that when Mr. Hinckle rang the door bell at Mrs. Tricler's home, no one happened to be in; for, Claude Nicholas, who had been there a short time before, had passed out, and chanced to return unobserved by Mr. Hinckle, while he was talking to Mrs. Kiplin at the house next door. This then, accounted for the light streaming through at the shutter; also, in his haste and worry Claude Nicholas on departing had forgotten to pick up the two letters, which afterwards fell into the possession of Mr. Hinckle.

In his confession Mr. Hinckle had not failed to explain how he had discovered the name of those living in house No. 22 Lake Ave., by making a few skillful inquiries after his arrival in Cleveland.

When Mr. Grant was looking in the small mirror that hung below the grand painting, he chanced to

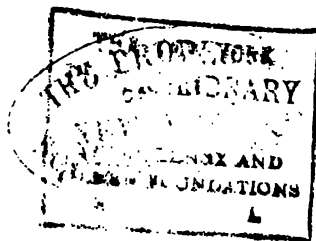


see a movement made by Mr. Hinckle, which at the time, he could not well understand: he had seen him raise the album and kiss a certain picture. It filled him with wonder, but he never inquired of Mr. Hinckle for the reason, so great was his confidence in him.

On Mr. Hinckle's return from Summer Mount, he found the Worthington home deserted, for it afterward became known that all, even to Miss Shaler and the coachman, were at Dr. Druid's house, for Mrs. Worthington had grown suddenly worse.

Soon after Mr. Hinckle's confession, the two who had been wrongly suspected were released.

THE END.



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